えろまんがせんせい

エロマンガ先生

eromanga sensei

いずみさぎりのはつとうこう

和泉紗霧の初登校

5

伏見つかさ

イラスト◆かんざきひろ

電撃文庫

えろまんがせんせい

エロマンガ先生

5

伏見つかさ

イラスト◆かんざきひろ

和泉紗霧の初登校

eromanga
sensei

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「そうこなくっちゃ、和泉ちゃんー！」
「じ、自信はないけど……精一杯……がんばってみたい」
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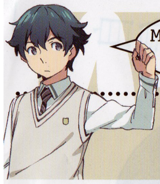
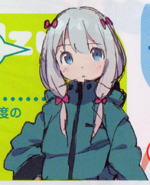
Sagiri Izumi & Megumi Jinno
エロマンガ先生
和泉紗霧の初登校



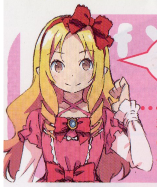
Masamune Izumi
和泉正宗（いずみ・まさむね）

高校に通いながら小説家の仕事をしている。PNは和泉マサムネ。引きこもりの妹がいる。



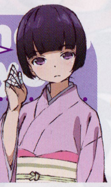
Sagiri Izumi
和泉紗霧（いずみ・さぎり）

正宗の、血のつながらない妹。重度の引きこもりだがエロマンガ先生というPNでイラストレーターをしている。えっちな絵を描くのが好き。



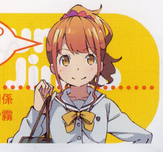
Elf Yamada
山田エルフ（PN）
（やまだ・えるふ）

和泉家のお隣さん。正宗とは別の出版社で活躍中の超売れっ子作家で自称、大小説家（グレーター・ノベリスト）。



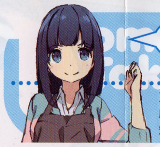
Muramasa Senjyu
千寿ムラマサ（PN）
（せんじゅ・むらまさ）

正宗と同じ出版社で活動する年下の先輩作家。正宗の大ファンで、彼がプロデビュー前に書いたWEB小説は全て保存している。



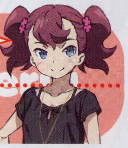
Megumi Jinno
神野めぐみ
（じんの・めぐみ）

紗霧のクラスメイト。人間関係最強のスーパー委員長で紗霧の天敵。



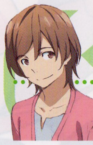
Tomoe Takasago
高砂智恵
（たかさご・ともえ）

正宗の同級生で「たかさご書店」の看板娘。正宗の職業を知る異性の友人。



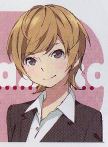
Amelia Armeria
アメリア・アルメリア

山田エルフの小説挿絵を担当するイラストレーター。エルフの幼馴染で、とても仲がいい。



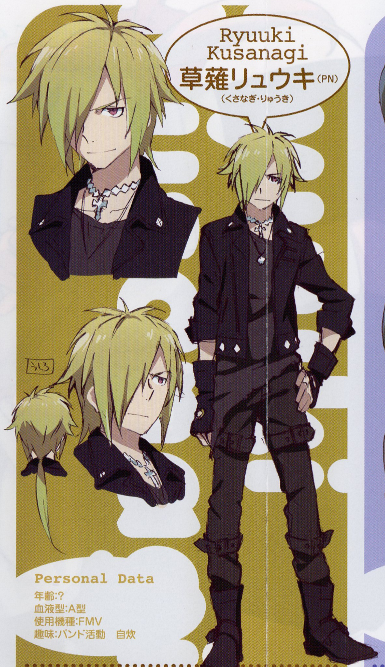
Kunimitsu Shidou
獅童国光（PN）
（しどう・くにみつ）

正宗と同じレーベルで活動する新人作家。穏やかな人物なのだが……ちょっとした弱点がある。



Ayame Kagurazaka
神楽坂あやめ
（かぐらざか・あやめ）

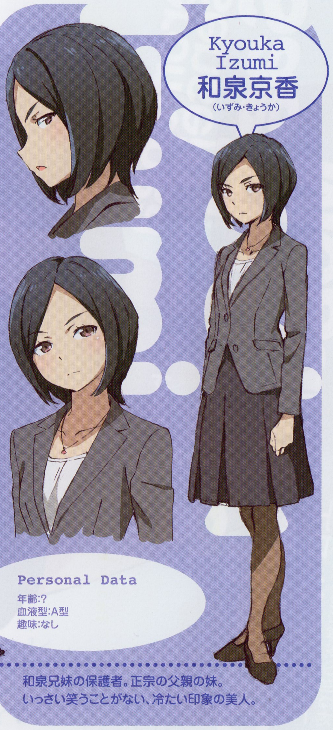
正宗たちの担当編集。たくさんのヒット作を抱えているが、ちょっぴりうさんくさい。



Ryuuki Kusanagi
草薙リュウキ（PN）
（くさなぎ・りゅうき）

Personal Data
年齢:?
血液型:A型
使用機種:FMV
趣味:バンド活動　自炊

和泉正宗と同じレーベルで活動する先輩作家。
代表作は、アニメ化も決定した「ぴゅあらぶ。」。



Kyouka Izumi
和泉京香
（いずみ・きょうか）

Personal Data
年齢:?
血液型:A型
趣味:なし

和泉兄妹の保護者。正宗の父親の妹。
いっさい笑うことがない、冷たい印象の美人。

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sensei

5

和泉紗霧の初登校

伏見つかさ

イラスト◆かんざきひろ

Chapter 1

第一章

December 10th – to us sibling, this is a very special day – the day volume two of our light novel “The cutest little sister in the world” is scheduled to sell. At the same time, Sekaimo’s manga version is also published in the Comic Manga magazine. By the way, a certain friend of mine, who is also work at a bookstore finally promoted my work to “interesting” status.

Also –this is my little sister’s birthday.

My little sister, Sagiri, as a hikikomori, a light novel illustrator, a co-worker and a little sister did received a warm birthday party from many people.

First, she made a live birthday party online. After that, we held another birthday party with only us. Surrounded by many presents, my thirteen years old little sister looked truly happy. I will remember her expression forever.

That was yesterday. Today is December, 11th.

Since a lot happened, allowed me to reintroduce myself:

I’m Izumi Masamune, sixteen years old, high school student, first years. Light novel writer, Izumi Masamune.

My little sister is Izumi Sagiri, thirteen years old (probably), also known as a hikikomori illustrator “Eromanga-sensei”. Blue eyes, silver hair, a stunning beauty, When she become a year older, my age also increased. The distance between us reverted back to normal and remained unchanged.

It was the same for our relationship. No, that example wasn’t right – a least compare to “age different”, there was hope in this aspect. Even though she run away many times before, as long as I don’t give up, surely I could become closer to her. Someday, we will become true sibling….hopefully.

“Sagiri, rice is about to be done! Oh right, you are thirteen years old now, much cuter than before! Let’s take a picture, I want to change my cellphone’s wallpaper.”

My little sister hastily opened “The locked door”, looked at me who was holding her breakfast, narrowed her eyes and replied “Don’t wanna, because Nii-san is a pervert.”

“Er? What did I do?” I asked in surprised.

Sagiri blushed, said “Don’t use my picture…as your wallpaper.”

“Can’t do that, this is the source of my power”

Hearing my firm response, my little sister quietly concluded:

“….Pervert.”

I couldn’t help but trembled:

“I’m not a pervert! For a brother who always think about his little sister, this is totally normal!”

“It’s still pervert, not to mention…” Sagiri frowned, looked directly at me “Yesterday, after the party…Nii-san did something pervert to me, didn’t you….”

“I didn’t do anything!”

“You did!”

“How could you be so sure? Even if I did something pervert to you, how could you know when you were fast asleep?”

“I knew it! You did something!” Sagiri spoke and thrashed her finger at my face. But while she was blushing, I got a feeling that she was happy. Was that a mistake on my part?

“I didn’t do anything! Absolutely nothing! I told you, nothing at all!”

“Every time Nii-san tried your best to deny something, actually you did do something…”

“Well….that wasn’t wrong, but this time I truly didn’t do anything!”

“Really?”

“Yes! Please believe me! I only brought you to the bed, put the blanket on…although I did caressed your face a bit….”

“…You don’t have to say everything.”

“— I swear on my life that I didn’t do anything suspicious!”

“…Hmm ~ so you really didn’t do anything ~~?”

“Why are you getting angry now —? Don’t you believe me? How could I do something to my little sister?”

“Get out”

“— What?”

“Get out! I want to eat my meal now!” She said in a terrifying tone “Get out, get out now! Get out of my sight right now!”

“Ouch ouch…it hurt…okay, I got it.”

Still, my little sister with an extreme displease expression kicked me out of her room.

“..Stupid.”

Said that, with a quiet *click*, the door slam shut. Another thing that I will probably never understand about her.

“Damn…I though we managed to get closer…”

Sagiri..someday…we will become true sibling…right?

In Japan, December is a month with lots and lots of holidays. Of course, ‘my little sister’s birthday’ is the most important one to me. Aside from that, there were many other holidays, like Christmas, winter break, new year break…etc…

But regrettably, my parent couldn’t come home anymore, nor do I have a girlfriend to spend the Christmas. Thus, as a light novel author, I quietly took my pen, notebook out and thinking “Next volume, I will write about Christmas…”

That was how it always be to me. At first, I was afraid of someone knew about Izumi Masamune’s real identify, but nothing happened so far. Not to mention that the one who should know is already on it.

“The unmask death match” — during that match, the famous illustrator Armeria-sensei showed her face the first time. I was there too as a honor guest. Until today, December 11th, to think that all the people who know me at school didn’t belong to the five hundreds thousand people who watched this show is too much optimism.

Still, no one told me “Hey, so you are a light novel author!” or “Please introduce me to Army-chan.”. This is a good thing, since I don’t want to talk about it at school. Even if someone know me in school noticed, I hope whoever he is can kept quiet.

Finally, the last bell rang signal the end of the school day. The classroom instantly became noisy, with most of the student talk about Christmas. Unless someone talked about their lover, the main topic was ‘What will you do during Christmas’ or ‘Is there any good concert during Christmas’.

“Let’s go home then….”

Since I got nothing to do, I planed to quickly get home with my little sister. But when I was picking up my bag and about to stand up, the classroom suddenly muttered among themselves “Hey, look…”

“Wow…what a cute girl.”

“B..blonde hair? She didn’t dye it, did she?”

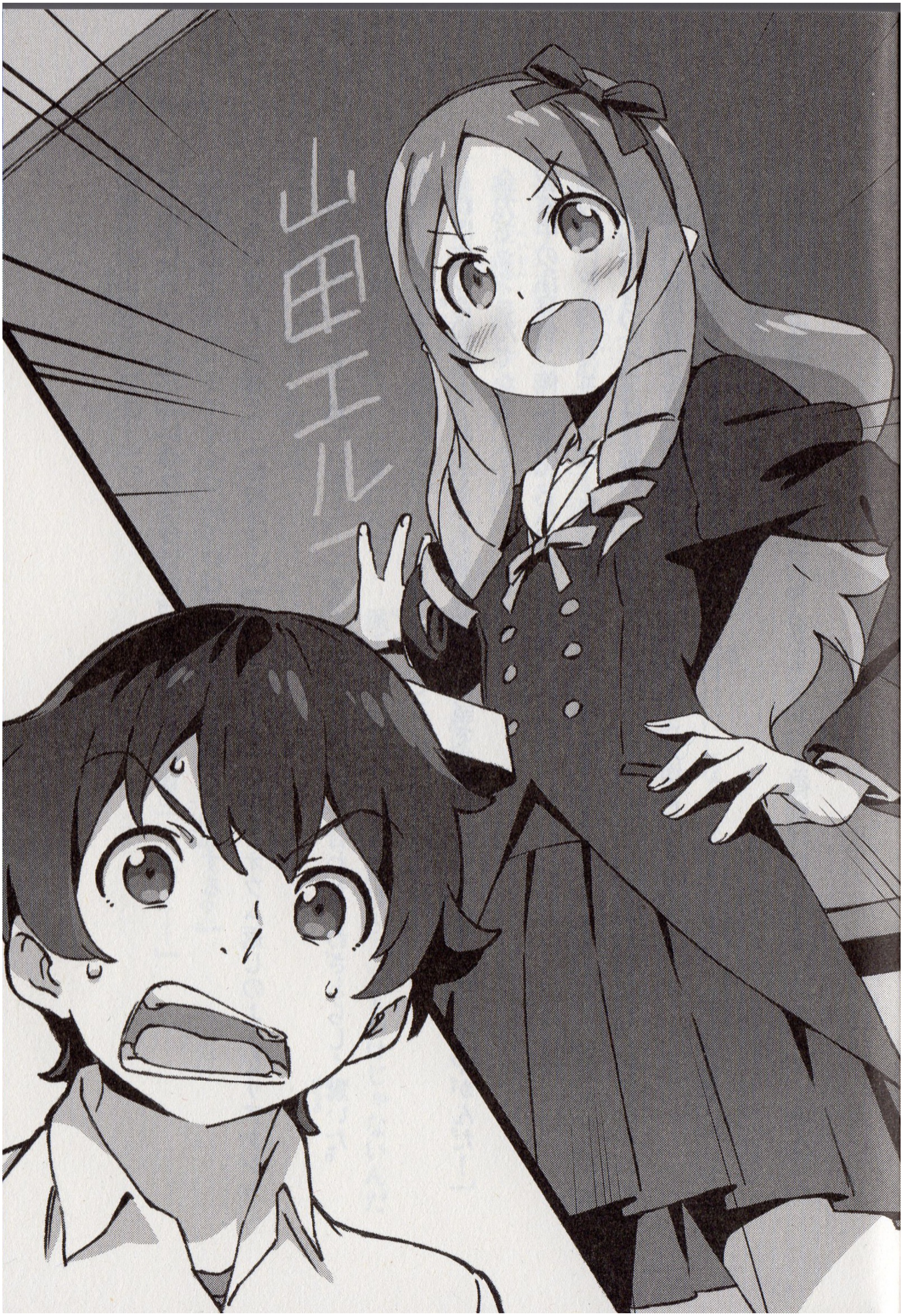
“Who is that?”

“What uniform is that?”

“She is coming here!”

I looked at my classroom’s door — Crap – a blonde devil who could easily disrupt my normal lifestyle was there.

Elf? What is she doing here? She was wearing the same middle age school uniform she wore at the Arakawa’s river side before. Under my whole class’s gaze, she calmly walk to the blackboard, took a chalk and wrote her name ‘Yamada Elf’. Then she turned around, loudly announced: “I’m the new transfer student, Yamada Elf!”


山田エルフ

— What the heck? What the heck is she talking about? I was totally in chaos, unable to understand anything. My classmate was no better, they could only repeat to themselves: “Transfer student?” “Eh? Elf?” – like that.

When I was staring at Elf, she also meet my eyes, and then tried to act surprise, thrashed her finger at my face, asked: “Ah! You are the one back then! Why are you here?”

“This was my line! What are you trying to do, making an act at my classroom?”

After yelled back, I realized that something was amiss – meaning that the whole class was focusing their attention in me.

Hearing my question, Elf put her hand on her hips, made a triumph pose and replied:

“Hm hm ~ this is a very common event in fighting light novel ‘The transfer student arrived’. As a romance light novel author, of course I have to try it to gain experience. So, did your heart race?”

“It did. In fact, it was about to jump out of my chest! But it totally not because of what you indented!”

“Kufufu, right right…! It’s fine if you feel full of yourself! How about it, the feeling that everyone stare at you in admiration?”

“You…you….you………..”

Yes, the new transfer schoolgirl noticed the main character in her class – it’s a common event in light novel. But it’s definitely not a good thing when it happened to my own self.

After that, a group will undoubtedly interrogated me “What is going on”. And I didn’t think that I could keep the secret about my light novel career.

Give me back my normal lifestyle! I quickly stood up, took Elf’s hand and pulled her to a corner, quietly asked: “Elf, what are you doing here? You can’t just came to try that event, didn’t you?”

“Kufufu, it’s….”

“Is she Izumi’s acquaintance?”

“What is their relationship?”

“Yamada Elf is….”

“I know, she appeared during a live Nico event…”

Ohhhhhh crappppp! I have to get out of her, fast!

As a voice was shouting “It’s bad it’s bad, what can I do now’ in my head, I asked Elf:

“Elf, if you have anything to tell me then do it now. Thanks to you, now I got a huge problem.”

But she answered with such happy expression:

“Masamune, let’s go on a Christmas date with me ♪.”

I pulled her hand and made a run out of the classroom at top speed.

“Ha…ha…it should be fine here…”

I took a handkerchief and wiped away my sweat. Looking back, I saw Elf was breathing heavily, her face flushed: “…Kufufufu…really…so you want to enter a private world with just me?”

“No I didn’t….What am I going to do now? What can I say to my classmate tomorrow?”

“Tell them ‘do you jealous? I have such beautiful girlfriend’.”

If I did that, they will kill me, no question asked.

“Okay, so now I have a reference to ‘what would a normal high school student do if a beautiful girl suddenly appear’.”

“Just listen to me for a second!”

“Not to mention that I saw the your reaction – just like any other main character in light novel. What an unexpected bonus.”

“The first one to write about it will probably agree with you.”

I don’t know who was the first one to write about this kind of event, but creating something anyone can use is clearly amazing. Unlike Elf, if I have to name a special skill, it’s probably something like that.

“…Forget it, just go back home.”

“Yes, let’s go home together like this, hand in hand.”

“Ah? Sorry!?”

I let go of her hand, which I was holding for a while.

"…."

Elf stared quietly at my hand without saying anything. In that strange atmosphere, both of us went home.

Half way to our home, Elf asked:

"So, where are we going to go to?"

"Huh?"

"Christmas date, Christmas date. You need to make some nice travel plan. Make sure to guard me well."

"Nope, I plan to spend Christmas at home."

"Ack…that mean…home dating? Ah…could…could that be…." Elf run away from me, hugging her own body, a hint of embarrassment appeared on her face "Pervert! Masamune is a pervert! While it's Christmas, what you plan to do is way too fast!"

What exactly this idiot misunderstanding about?

"I don't have any clue what are you talking about – I plan to buy some cake and spend Christmas with my little sister at home."

"Eh? You don't have any pervert idea with me, just like those novel from Degenki Bunko? You don't want to do some happy 'exchange' with me?"

"Nope, who would want that."

What exactly are you talking about?

Elf pouted, said in dissatisfaction.

"Ah ~ hm ~ little sister, little sister. You damn siscon!"

"It's none of your business."

"Er, Masamune, even if you aren't there, Eromanga-sensei has already prepare to celebrate Christmas online."

"You are right."

It was the same during her birthday, she had her fan online to celebrate with, she had other illustrator to talk to — she could happily enjoy others blessing.

“Even if you told her to spend Christmas with you, I think that she will coldly refused anyway. I can imagine how you will spend a Christmas night alone…”

“You might be right.”

I could actually see that happened. If I was home during Christmas, Sagiri won’t get any happier. In contrast, she might get mad and told me “This is none of your business.”

Even so, I could also imagine during the Christmas night, since she is a hikikomori who couldn’t go outside, she could only stayed at home to watch television, read some special Christmas magazine – I don’t want that to happen.

“… Hm ~ doesn’t look like you will change your mind.”

Looked like Elf saw through me. She opened her hands wide, said:

“Then let’s call up everyone and make a Christmas party together.”

Later that day…

“Onii-san, let’s hold a Christmas party!”

Once again, I hear those word. The speaker was Sagiri’s classmate – the one who is best at poking into others business Megumi Jinno. Brown hair, a smiled full of life and her uniform turned her into a proper beautiful girl. Just after I heard the door bell rang and opened to see who was that, she nearly shouted into my face.

Facing the sudden development, I stared in disbelieve:

“Christmas party?”

“Yes! You see, someone took the initiative and hold a birthday earlier, right?”

Yeah. By the netizen.

Megumi came in order to meet Sagiri during her birthday – but since my little sister was holding an online birthday party, so those two didn’t meet. I thought that she came because she wanted to tell Sagiri in person: happy birthday. I thought that was the only reason – but turn out she had another intention regarding the Christmas party.

Megumi raised her index finger, continued:

“Thanks to the experience of the last time, this time I want to book Izumi-chan for myself.”

She entered, looked at me in a a-little-ecchi pose.

“That’s why I came here! Onii-san, is that okay?”

“Well…”

Crap, her face was so close! Was she trying to charm me?

I took a few big steps back, answered:

“Christmas party will take place in December 24th, right?”

“Yes.”

“What about you? Are you okay with that?”

“Ah.”

Looked like Megumi understood my question, she gave me a charming look.

“I’m happy since you care about me that much! Now I don’t have a boyfriend, I planed to meet my friend in December 25th, so it’s okay.”

“Is that so?”

“Do you feel relieve now?”

“Yeah, somewhat.”

That was how it always is. Every time, she made me feel hard just to keep up with her.

I looked at her, thinking for a while before saying:

“Megumi, you planed to hold a party in December 24th, right? But Sagiri already had plan for that day.”

“Eh? Really? A hikikomori have plan?”

“What’s wrong with that? Who said hikikomori couldn’t have plan in Christmas?”

If Eromanga-sensei was here, she would said that.

Megumi still didn’t look convinced:

“Hm ~ you meant ‘online friend’, right?”

By the way, Megumi didn’t know that Sagiri is Eromanga-sensei. She only knew that Sagiri ‘love drawing, also very active online’.

Well…let’s see if she is capable of feeling regret then. With a voice full of proud, I answered:

“No, we planed to hold a party that day with our friends.”

Since Megumi was trying to “become Sagiri’s best friend”, she would probably complain – at least I thought so.

However, her reaction was pretty normal

“Ah, could it be? Was it ‘the neighbor that share Izumi-chan’s situation’?”

“Well, yup, the one I talked with you at the Takasago bookstore.”

“Um, Tomoe-chan even suggested me a lot of unfinished light novel.”

It was true. ‘The neighbor that share Izumi-chan’s situation’ was no one but Yamada Elf-sensei.

“I see…so it’s like that…Fufu…then it’s even better” Megumi happily raised her hand, naturally announced

“Then I want to join that party too.”

“That —“

I was about to decline, because this idea was bad, really bad. If that party was lead by Elf, then guest would be her, Eromanga-sensei, Muramasa-senpai, Shidou-kun, Amelia-sensei. If those weirdo meet a troublemaker like Megumi – oh crap, I could already seen a mountain of trouble.

I had no way to predict what the end result will be. Worse case, Megumi will find out the truth about Eromanga-sensei.

Before I could think of a reason (and the right wording) to refuse, something unexpected happened.

“If you wanted to join in the Christmas party, you have to ask me, the leader instead of Masamune.”

Behind me, in a middle school uniform was Elf.

After our time at the island, she always treated my home as her.

Facing the sudden appearance of Elf-sensei, Megumi's eyes shone:

"Onii-san, who is that cute girl?"

"….."

What should I answer? Telling the truth won't be a problem, she already knew that I'm the light novel author Izumi Masamune. Not to mention that thanks to a certain evil bookstore mistress named Tomoe, Megumi now already had beginner's knowledge about light novel. It should be fine if I introduce Elf here.

"Well, this is 'the neighbor that share Izumi-chan's situation' we just spoke of —"

"My name is Yamada Elf! Izumi Masamune's best friend and his master!"

I took that back, there is no way it would be fine! What kind of introduction was that? She was talking to a middle age school girl!

I thought Megumi was stunned speechless. But turn out, she bowed to Elf:

"You must be Yamada Elf-sensei. This is our first meeting, please take care of me.~♪ "

"You two knew each other?" I looked at them, but Elf shook her head in doubt.

"This is our first meeting?…well….but when did we know about each other…? And where?"

"Ahaha, don't you remember me? I'm Jinno Megumi."

"Jinno Megumi…where have I heard of this name…why does I felt that I should hate this person…"

"We have talk a lot, actually —-"

"Ahhhhhhh!" Elf suddenly shouted, then, with a trembling finger, she thrashed her hand at Megumi:

"Jinno Megumi! You are the rude one from back then!"

Facing a teeth-gritting Elf, Megumi just rudely laughed:

"Ahaha, rude one? What era do you live in?"

Still, that conversation didn’t explain anything to me. I frown, asked Megumi:

“Megumi, what did you do to Elf?”

“Eh? Well, I said via twitter I have read Elf-sensei’s book, please be my friend but some how she blocked me.”

“You were the one who started it! Elf-sensei’s book is so good ~ there are a lot of them at Book Off[1] and If each one cost ¥100, then I will buy them all ♪ . It was too rude, that’s why I blocked you!”

Can’t believe this girl really have 500 friends. I think that her specialty is getting on people’s nerve.

“Megumi teased you, so you blocked her? What a surprise response.”

Still, Elf is the type who quickly forgive, so I don’t think there will be any trouble.

“But my novel is adapted into anime, you have to watch it.”

“Is it that good?”

“Of course, praise me, praise me more!”

“It’s gonna be really good, I’m sure of it.”

“Um!”

Seeing the child-like smile from Elf, I suddenly had an urge to tease her.

Noticing me, Megumi raised a hand:

“I’m good, so praise me too, Onii-san.”

“What?”

“You can pat my head.”

“No need.”

You wanted me to touch you again, didn’t you? I’m not going to get teased that way. Still, girl is truly frightening. Both this girl and Elf looked like they can read my mind.

Megumi coughed one, returned the conversation back to normal, said:

“So, I have become friend with Elf-sensei.”

“What? When? You two were fighting moment ago.”

“….That was that Elf-sensei said.”

For my question, Megumi just waved her hand, commented “Only friend fight with each others”

“You sounded like you are making a great line, but fighting online is not like that.”

In my opinion, fighting is face to face. Phone, message, skype, LINE, forum….none allow both side to see the others face. Both were just fighting a shadow, only increase one’s own frustration. There was case that after meeting face to face, they found out that the other wasn’t actually that bad. Both Elf and Muramasa-senpai were that way, after their horrible first meeting, now they had a normal relationship.

“You are right. Onii-san, sometime you said something right ♪.”

Megumi nodded, agree with my opinion. Then she hugged Elf.

“Hey you, what —“

“Then in order to make up, let’s play together. Elf-chan ❤, please invite me to your Christmas party!”

“You really are…”

She can turned the conversation to this no matter what. Really…

“…I accept your challenger.”

Elf muttered, her face showed a hint of displease. She run back, then pointed her finger at Megumi:

“Alright, Jinno Megumi, then you are allowed to come to my Christmas party! If you want to improve your relationship with me – then try!”

Translation: “I don’t know if we can actually get along or not, but please take care of me.”

That was that I meant by saying they found out that the other wasn’t actually that bad earlier.

“ – And that’s why everyone decided to hold a Christmas party here.”

After Megumi and Elf left, I told *the locked room* that. I expected to talk with her about it, but — "…."

On the other side, Sagiri didn't had any reaction.

By the way, Megumi had told Sagiri 'happy birthday' before leaving. She did it by shouting at the top of her lung from outside. Sagiri did opened the curtain a bit, her cheek deep red due to embarrassment.

I never thought that Sagiri would do that. Maybe she really is slowly opening her heart to Megumi.

"Sagiri? Are you listening to me? Eromanga-sensei! Eromanga-sensei —"

I knocked hard on the door, then it slowly *Clickkkkk* opened. Through the small opening, I could see Sagiri's face. She angry replied: "I heard you. And I don't know anyone with that name."

"Hah…if you hear me then please answer."

I was worry that something happened.

"I kicked you out this morning."

"I knew that you are still angry, but we need to address this matter as soon as possible."

Although this matter didn't involve the matter this morning, but I planed to take this chance to talk and make up with her "…hm."

From the opening, Sagiri think for a while "Christmas party huh?"

"Yes, Christmas party."

"….What should I do then…"

Looked like there is trouble.

"It's going to be fun, don't worry."

"No, it's not that."

I titled my head in confusion. I though Sagiri's trouble was because she worried about something, but looked like I was wrong.

"Sagiri, what is troubling you?"

"I'm not talking to Nii-san."

We fell into silence. It usually ended this way when I talked with my little sister, but I don't hate it.

Still thinking, suddenly Sagiri looked up, quietly asked me:

"…Nii-san."

"Yes? What?"

"In other words…winter?"

"Yes, of course."

Why are you asking that?

Sagiri paused, then continued:

"…That mean…outside is very cold?"

"…."

I was speechless. I see, so that's why! A problem only hikikomori know! Because she always stayed inside, she didn't know about the weather outside.

By the way, because she didn't go to school, she didn't always remember date. Only anime time and manuscript's deadline reminded her about "What day it is?" — shut-in light novel author had that problem. I could almost heard Elf's sneeze.

"Sagiri, now is winter, outside is very cold."

I answered seriously, my voice gentle.

"Um..very cold…then it should be fine…"

She was quiet again, then still holding the door, she said":

"Nii-san, change into your outdoor clothing, right now."

"????"

I totally don't understand my little sister.

After minutes later…

“Is that okay?”

I wore my thick coat then returned to *the locked room*. Sagiri also opened the door wide, showing her in the wool clothing – the same present I gave her earlier. It’s great that she had an use to them.

Without noticed my though, Sagiri stared at my clothing:

“Nii-san…you wore this outside?”

“Yes. Is something wrong?”

When I was on alert, Sagiri shook her head, said

“No…nothing is wrong.”

She kept staring, continued:

“…Um…where is your scarf?”

“I don’t have one. I don’t like using one.”

“? Huh, is that so.”

“What’s with that?”

“…Nothing, lower yourselves a bit.”

“??Like that?”

Is she asking me to be her model?

“Don’t move, let me take a closer look.”

Sagiri squatted down and looked at my feet. I felt a bit of embarrassment.

“Nii-san…you only have white socking?”

“Yes, it’s school’s regulation.”

“Don’t you have any winter-specific clothing?”

“Nope…”

What exactly are you getting at?

“Do you wear this because it’s fast to put on? That’s why you don’t wear wool or leather?”

“Not really, I never think of it that way. Not to mention other material is not allowed.”

“Do you want to them to be allowed?”

“Well, yeah.”

Why does my little sister interested in that matter? She even asked for Elf’s sock before… does that mean Sagiri had a sock fetish?

“Nii-san, you are thinking of something rude, aren’t you?”

“This is because your attitude is so weird. Say Sagiri, can I explain to avoid a misunderstanding? You asked for the weather, you asked for my sock, what exactly are you getting at?”

And what about the Christmas party? That was the reason I came in the first place.

“I’m not telling Nii-san.” Sagiri repeated her word earlier “But the Christmas party is fine… just tell me after you decide on the guest list.”

She said that and slammed the door on my face. What the hell?

And then, the Christmas party was hold in December 24th, in the middle of the day at my home’s living room. Since there were lots of guest, I had pushed the sofa to the side, prepared a big table in the middle and some mattress. I also prepared a Christmas tree – a bit small, but better than nothing. Some guest had already arrived earlier.

First was me, Izumi Masamune, sat in the middle.

“Everyone! The party is starting!”

On my right was my nextdoor neighbor, best selling author Yamada Elf. Today she didn’t wear her lolita clothing, but picked a short Christmas skirt instead. Of course it suited her very much, as long as she was here, the atmosphere was very enjoyable.

On my left was an author with similar style, Senjyu Muramasa-senpai. Although it didn’t suit the Christmas’s atmosphere, she still wore a kimono. Her eyes were following Elf, she said with a hint of sadness: “Kuh…this shameless pervert! How could she wear that clothing in order to charm man!”

Hearing that, Elf replied:

“Ah? Are you jealous? It’s good then ~ actually I had prepared for you something similar too.”

“Who, who would wear that! Why me!”

“Masamune, please say Please, can I see Muramasa-senpai in Christmas cosplay. . “

Of course I didn’t say it, but I did wanted to see.

“Wh..what…but….”

Seeing senpai flushed, Elf laughed happily. Recently, those two were always like that.

Next, I wanted to invite my junior, Shidou Kuminitsu, but unfortunately he had something urgent to take care of and can’t come. How tragic, to be called by his editor during Christmas.

“Elf-chan, if you have anymore Christmas clothing can I borrow one?”

In front of me, Megumi asked Elf. She looked like she had spent a lot of time to prepare her clothing. A jumper skirt, black tight-pants, a bit of makeup. Outside, she had a brilliant coat – a very dazzling combo.

While Elf was talking with Muramasa-senpai, hearing Megumi’s question, she seemed trouble:

“It’s not like I don’t want you to war, but I prepared them for Muramasa, so I don’t think they will suit you.”

“Elf-chan is too much ~ you meant my breast will break the clothes, aren’t you? Am I right? Onii-san?

“Why are you asking me?”

“Oh, I think you already understood ~”

I had no idea if her worries is true or not. Absolutely none! Why are you acting that way?

“Stop talking nonsense in front of Sagiri….”

I signed. But to think that Megumi could get along with everyone that fast. She was teasing people left and right, but get closer to others at the same time…amazing. Is that the legendary skill of making friend?

“Mune-kun, thank you for calling me today! As a light novel fan, a party with many famous light novel author is my paradise!”

On the left of Megumi was the Takasago bookstore's mistress, Takasago Tomoe. She had a literature girl's clothes, fur coat and hat. All of them suited her very much.

"You are welcomed. Considered this as thank for your help back then."

"Back then?"

"When Elf caused a mess, thank to you the damage was kept minimum."

"Ah, I see."

I only heard that from my male classmate later – after I run away with Elf, of course the classroom erupted into chaos. Tomoe was the one who calmed everyone down. Well, while my secret as a light novel author was revealed, she did tell people to 'not bother me too much' and 'this girl is Masamune's cousin'. Thank to her, the other guys in my class didn't want to kill me too much. Thank you very much, Tomoe!

"Truly, friends is one's treasure in life. Thank you so much!"

"You are welcome."

Tomoe hugged her head in embarrassment and turned to the side:

"By the way…"

"Kufufu, see, I knew that you can't wear it! Ahaha, Megumi, I thought you are confident with your asset ~ why does the breast area is so loose~?"

"Bwahhh, it can't be. Muramasa-chan, what is your measurement?"

"Who, who would tell you that! I, idiot, don't come here!"

I followed Tomoe's gaze and saw three girls busy on some shameless activities. Even though I was standing right here…

Tomoe nodded, spoke the same thought that I was thinking:

"Yamada Elf-sensei, Senjyu Muramasa-sensei, Megumi…and me. Everyone is cute beautiful girl, right?"

You count yourself in that?

"Um…say, Mune-kun…."

Tomoe turned to me, asked in a quiet tone to make sure no one can overheard:

“Who do you like most?”

“Pffff!!!!!” I spit take.

“To…Tomoe! What are you talking about!?”

“I asked who do you like. Didn’t we talked about it before — when I proposed.”

“What you are saying can easily lead to a very troublesome misunderstanding. Stop now.”

Stop please. While it’s still possible.

If I remember correctly – she said

“If Mune-kun can write a novel good enough to be made into anime, earn as much money as Yamada Elf-sensei —“

“Earn as much money?”

“I will accept to be your bride.”

“Don’t try to hide the fact that you are after money!”

We did have a conversation like that before, but back then I answered her:

“Reject. I already have someone I like.”

“Is the person you like among them?”

“…..”

Facing her question, I hesitated a bit, but said:

“She is.”

“Hmm ~ who is that? Elf-sensei? Muramasa-sensei ? Or Megumi ? Who might that be? Or…”

She suddenly stopped, then spoke in a teasing tone

“Or it’s me?”

I replied in the same tone:

“Of course not.”

“Is that so? What a pity. Truly a pity.” She smiled.

Due to some reasons, I was a bit late, thus I’m now the last person to join the party. I took the microphone, spoke: “Is everything ok?”

“…Um,…yes….”

The screen didn’t show Eromanga-sensei in mask, but rather “plain” Sagiri, because there were Tomoe and Megumi here, both didn’t know about Eromanga-sensei.

I didn’t want to clarify thing, so the simple explanation is “since Eromanga-sensei couldn’t join, the hikikomori Sagiri will take part instead.” She also required “Hide it from Megumi no matter what.”

Well, even if Tomoe knew, it’s very simple to buy her silence. But if a classmate knew that she is “An illustrator who love erotic drawing”, well, that might be too much embarrassing for a middle-age school girl.

Now, my little sister appeared now as “Eromanga-sensei” but as “Sagiri”. That was her decision…Although saying that might be too much, but I think it’s a big improvement.

I spoke to the microphone on my hand:

“Let’s have a good time, Sagiri.”

“…Um.” She quietly replied

I looked at the room. There was Christmas’s cake and non-alcoholic champagne. Elf choose to take care of food, so nothing was here yet. Other girls were already finished preparing.

“Good. Then let’s begin.” I raised my glass “Merry Christmas!”

The party began. In short, Elf-sensei immediately took the lead, said “Hurry up and begin present exchange!”. This was what they were talking about earlier, which we would show what our present was – anything is fine, from good to a show.

“My present is food, X-mas’s roasted chicken. Army-chan is bringing it out. It’s a food with 4500 attack power “

“Army-sensei came too?”

“She will be a bit late, but she has a amazing performance, so be sure to look forward to it!”

Elf answered while waving her hand. To think that she know that something might be even better than her food.

“If Elf-chan said so…then it’s certainly worth waiting for.” Sagiri muttered.

Looked like my worry is for naught, everything is fine…for now, at least. A little too small, but not a problem.

“Just leave it to me, Sagiri.”

Elf looked directly at Sagiri through the screen, called her by name the first time.

“….It feel a bit strange.”

“Me too.”

Both of them blush in embarrassment.

Then Elf looked at everyone and introduced:

“Since it’s the first time for some people here, let me introduce. This is Masamune’s little sister, Sagiri-chan.”

“Please to meet you, Mune-kun’s little sister. I’m Takasago Tomoe.”

“Izumi-chan, thank you to inviting me today ♪, I’m so happy ♪.”

“I’m Senjyu Muramasa, please to meet you – and you can call me sister-in-law, I don’t mind.”

Everyone greeted Sagiri…but what the heck is Muramasa-senpai talking about….

Hearing that, Sagiri blushed furiously, her head dropped down unable to answer. After a moment, she muttered “…Th…thank you…”. Since her voice was too small, no one but me heard her. She said “It’s my line, thank you, everyone.”

“Everyone, due to some reasons, Sagiri couldn’t go out of her room, so allow me to give you her presents.”

I said while gave everyone a hand-size present – of course, there was one for me too.

“Let’s open it. Actually, even I don’t know that it is.” I urged, while opening my own present.

Inside was —

“Ah…this is…”

“Ahaha, isn’t it nice?”

“Ahhhh….so cute.”

“Beautiful!”

It was a bunch of hand-size statue. For Elf, it was a character from her masterpiece “The Flame of Dark Elf”. For Muramasa-senpai and Tomoe, it was a character from “Fantasy Demon Blade Legend”, while I got the little sister from “Sekaimo”. And Megumi — “Is that…is that me?”

She got a statue look very similar to herself.

In the screen, Sagiri looked down, maybe because she felt embarrassed with the fact that everyone is looking at her present. Even though her erotic drawing was seen countless time before by thousand of people…I really don’t get it.

“…I practiced it before…but a month is not enough…I’m glad that you like it…”

Like she was speaking for everyone present, Megumi shouted:

“Thank you, Izumi-chan! I will treasure it!”

“Um..it’s not exactly….it’s just…”

“Ahahah, Izumi-chan, you are so cute”

“~~~~”

I got it now. Sagiri was both extremely happy and extremely embarrassed at the moment.

After we exchanged present, the party continue happily. Tomoe’s present was a foreign child's book and drawing guideline, totally suitable for a bookstore’s worker. Muramasa-senpai, unexpectedly, brought a character’s keychain, which Sagiri loves very much.

Megumi’s present was a bracelet jewelry, colourful strings, nail’s make up and other girly stuff. By the way, there was absolutely nothing for man at all — “Everyone, come and take a look! I though it was a legend, but I made this – the picture of ‘The beautiful girl, light novelist Masamune-chan’!”

“It can’t be…Masamune-kun looked so cute!”

Somehow, a picture of me (crossdress) appeared amiss the party.

“Hey hey Megumi, what are you doing? Why are you taking picture!?”

“Eh? Of course I want to upload it to the Internet so people can see it?”

“Please, I beg you, don’t do that!”

Finally, it’s my presents. How should I put it, those were quite normal, just normal stuff you can get from a convenience store. For a student and a novelist, they were suitable. Not too flashy or too bad-looking, but at the same time, not exactly special.

“Haha, what Onii-san wanted to say it: ‘read more light novel, especially what I wrote here, right’ ?”

“Tri-colour pen…normal present, as expected from you. Well, I will use it. By the way, you do have a secret present for someone after this party, right? No need to hide, I can see it from your face.”

“What a cute pen, I will use it to write romance novel.”

“That…Mune-kun, isn’t that something you bought from my home’s store?”

Still, everyone was happy. Suddenly…

“Hi everyone, merry Christmas!”

Finally, after hours late, Army arrived. Red hair, slant eyes, full of energy – Amelia Armeria, pen name “Army”, Elf’s childhood friend, also her illustrator for “The Flame of Dark Elf”. A very talent and quick working illustrator, right now is helping us sibling in making “The cutest little sister in the world” manga version.

I opened the front door and led her to the living room. The first one to show a reaction was Elf. She immediately jumped up, said: “Army-chan, you are so slow!”

“Sorry sorry, it took longer than expected.”

Army said while raising her thump. As usual, they looked like a couple.

She walked to me and took the microphone, spoke to Sagiri:

“Sagiri too, merry Christmas!”

“…Um.”

“Is something wrong? Do you have a fever? Did you eat your meal? Can I give you a hug?”

“No fever. Already eat. No hug.”

Seeing how much Army cared for Sagiri, Megumi’s reaction was more than usual. She asked:

“Ouch, ouch, Izumi-chan, who is the beauty just arrived?”

“Ah..this is….my older sister.”

Army and Sagiri’s relationship was a bit complicated, this is the closest explanation I could think of, sisters without blood relationship. This relationship was exactly what I wanted to have, so you can say I was a bit jealous.

“Yes yes, I’m Sagiri’s older sister. You can call me the beautiful illustrator Army-chan.”

“!? It can’t be! This …is the real one! Wahhh!! ~ I’m your big fan! I have seen your ‘unmask shotdown’.”

As a light novel lover, Tomoe was extremely moved. She showed the same reaction when I introduced Muramasa-senpai. Seeing her so happy made it worthwhile to invite her.

On the other hand, Megumi showed a pretty normal reaction. She turned to Army, said:

“Ah, I remember that you are the illustrator who work with Elf-sensei. Hah…Izumi-chan’s older sister? I have a lot of question later…Oh, I forgot to introduce myself. Army-chan, I’m Jinno Megumi, but you can call me just Megumi. Please be my friend.”

“Please to meet you, Megumi.”

In an instant, Megumi gained a few more friends. Could I say she is easy-going or careless? This was her first meeting with them…

When I was stunned looking at this scene —

“Masamune, Masamune.”

Army wagged her finger calling me, an teasing grin on her face.

“Yes?” I walked to her without thinking, which she immediately latched on my shoulder.

“This is my greeting.”

Chuu She kissed me.

“!!!!!!!!!!”

Instantly, lighting roared in my room, the atmosphere also frozen solid.

“Mu, Mune-kun…is that girl…?” Tomoe got another strange misunderstanding.

“You, you….” Muramasa-senpai still remained on her seat, but her eyes were dead cold.

“Ah….” Megumi covered her mouth, unable to say anything.

“…..” Sagiri’s face was so terrify, I didn’t dare to look at.

“Wh…what…what are….”

“What the hell are you doing!?”

I was speechless, but Elf yelled out in my place. She was so angry that she rushed to us.

“Ar…Army…you…you!!! What the hell was that? What are you doing? You, you, you, didn’t you said you have no interest in having a relationship with a man? You even laughed when you said you’d rather be friend with Masamune’s lover? Yet you…!!!”

“~~~~~~~~~”

Seeing how angry Elf was, Army’s whole body trembled, her face changed into…an erotic looking one. Well, she is Eromanga-sensei’s older sister, so it’s expected that she is a pervert.

“Yup, I do not have any interest in making a relationship with a man.” She answered with a hint of annoyance, but she still held me harder.

“What you said and what you are doing are completely different! I already think that something is strange, something happened when you two returned from Army-chan’s room. Don’t even try to deceive my eyes!”

“Amazing Emily! Totally right! Yes, something did happened. Right, Masamune?”

“Army, are you saying that on purpose?”

Something happened? Yes! The first condition for her to accept doing our manga – acting lovely dovey in front of Emily with me – that was it! Her aim was to tease Elf, to see her flushed and angry.

“Ehehe” Army grinned

Elf is very sensitive, if we did that shouldn’t we be found out immediately?

Emile is stupid, we can fool her easily

Turned out what she said back then was right.

“I repeat, we aren’t going out. Just now is only a friendly kiss, something very common in other country aside from Japan.”

“Common my ass! How could you have such erotic expression from a friendly kiss?”

“….Eh? It can’t be. What kind of expression I had?”

Looked like even her doesn’t know.

Somehow, Muramasa-senpai had walked to us without a sound. She raised a small hand mirror to Army, said:

“Just like that! What a shameless expression. What a pervert manga artist, as expected from someone called themselves Eromanga-sensei Great…I will take care of you right here, go to hell to reflect on yourselves!”

“This girl still had that habit of saying outrage things with a straight face!”

Army tried her best to resist Muramasa-senpai’s physical attack. Well, that was common for them, at least.

“Hey, both of you, be quiet for a moment!”

Hearing that, I slowly peaked at the screen behind me, while Army also spoke to Sagiri:

“Hey Sagiri, turn just standing here and say nothing. Look, your brother is being taken away by me, don’t you have anything to say?”

“No no, it’s not like that. Just listen to me Sagiri! Just listen, it’s Army…crap…Sa…Sagiri?”

“………………”

“Crap………..”

Both me and Army froze. Sagiri is not very angry as usual. She is very very angry! Her mouth morphed into a shape, she looked like a bomb which is about to go off.

I hastily turned to Army, muttered:

“Hey you, hurry up and think of something.”

“Why me? We had an agreement! We need to show an act to make both of them jealous….”

During me had our secret conversation, Sagiri coldly ended us both:

“…I hate you both.”

“Sagiri, I’m so sorry!”

“Onee-chan is at fault, please!”

Both of us rushed toward *the locked room* , kneeled down and try to beg for forgiveness.

And that’s how Army’s plan “to make both Elf and Sagiri jealous” ended in utterly failure.

After the Christmas party resumed, everyone (Sagiri included) happily ate Elf’s food present – roasted chicken. Finally, it’s Army’s turn to give her present.

“Now it’s my present’s turn. Actually….”

“I and Army-chan will both give you guys present. Everyone will be surprise.” Elf continued, looked very happy.

What is Army’s present be?

“It’s a present that will make everyone happy, so Sagiri, please don’t mad anymore…”

“….I’m not mad, and don’t talk with me.”

“She is still very mad! I’m sorry, I don’t expect that you react that way toward Masamune…”

“No, stop! If you say anything more I won’t acknowledge you as my sister anymore!”

“Okay okay I got it! I won’t say anything!”

Army held the microphone on her hand and stood next to the screen to answer Sagiri. Seeing how she was pushed around like me earlier made me felt a bit strange.

“Um…so it’s why. I knew that coming here today is going to be worthwhile ♪”

Suddenly Megumi muttered to herself, before turned to Elf

“So what’s the present, Elf-chan?”

“Listen well Megumi, the precious treasure we brought here today is —“

Elf took a thin DVD box from Army, raised it about her head and said:

“The first DVD of ‘The Flame of Dark Elf’ is finally here! I’m going to show it right here!”

I can almost see the light coming from the box. Truly, Elf and Army’s present is our sibling’s goal, the crystallize of our dream.

We gathered around the sofa in the living room, in front of the television. Elf sat on the middle, Tomoe on the left, Megumi on the right. Since it was impossible to sat five people there, Muramasa-senpai, Army and me was standing. On my microphone, Sagiri muttered, showing her annoyance: “I can’t barely see anything.”

“I think that everyone is already know, but now we are going to show mine – Yamada Elf’s masterpiece ‘The Flame of Dark Elf’, volume one! Army-chan just brought the white box here right after it was finished! Are we clear?”

“Yeah, it was only a few hours old, that’s why I was late.” Army answered.

“You can see the most wonderful anime of the 21th century a month sooner than television, do you know how lucky you are?”

“By the way, what is a white box?”

Megumi raised a hand to ask. Tomoe raised a finger and made an explaining pose:

“Megumi, white box is —“

In short, white box is sample given to the author before the anime is released. Since ‘tape’ was originally stored in white box, it gained its name from here. Now, it was mostly used to store DVD thought. By the way, there was an anime named like that recently[2], do you guys know about it?

“—-It’s basically that, do you get it?”

“Alright ~”

Seeing Megumi answered, I turned to Elf:

“It’s really lucky. Thank you, original author.”

“Just leave it to me!” Elf smiled brightly, raised her thump finger at me.

“Elf-chan looked very happy.” Sagiri smiled slightly at Elf.

“Of course…even I would act the same when my dream come true.”

Anime is the ultimate stage of a novel. It can turned a character in your mind into a moving, talking character. It can make many people happy, many people to like it. For example, like a prideful female girl who is finally selected for the main heroine in a school's play.

"I'm so jealous…"

I could hear my little sister quietly talking. If she was next to me, I would have pat her head and told her "There is no need to be jealous, we will make our dream come true."

Megumi looked like she wanted to share the happiness with Elf, she joined in:

"Elf-chan, is the anime that great?"

"Kufufu! I haven't seen it yet, but I'm sure it will be amazing!" Elf turned to Army "This novel was made by a team of two super genius! Army-chan even oversee the character design of the anime!"

Army smiled gently:

"You also took part in the checking anime's story, wrote the original novel. We both tried our best."

"Yes. Everyone spent countless sleepless night to make this anime."

I knew. I knew it better than anyone. I have heard Elf talked that way many times before – after knowing her for half a year, I have seen how much she love anime, how much she pushed herself for it.

Sometime her editor scolded her. Sometime she was crying when working. Sometime she complained because too much work made her unable to play games. Sometime she felt lazy and run away. Sometime she even call playing is working…No least than twenty time I have asked myself : is she really an author? She is like a NEET.

But in the end, Elf never missed a deadline. Every three months, she published a new novel. She even handle her work (huge work) when dealing with the anime well. People can't help but felt awe and respect at her work attitude…Of course I will never badmouthing her directly, but I felt happy to be here, to watch the fruit of her work with everyone.

"…Well, finally." Elf raised the remote toward the television, her hand was trembling…I never thought she would be that nervous, but now I felt a hint of empathetic.

She swallowed, said "Start" and pressed the button. The anime began to show on my home's television.

At first, it was the number 10. Then it quickly changed to 9, 8 ,7…and …

“It’s starting.”

“…Is it really going to be that amazing?”

“Wow, my heart is racing. ♪”

“Be quiet, here is come.”

Finally, the opening began. It was the same opening scene from the original light novel, showing the black hair protagonist during battle. His tall, thin body covered in black coat made him looked bigger. Since he was running away from home, after many hardship he gradually became kinder – this fact is welcomed by many middle age schooler.

The protagonist was fighting amiss a heavy forest. He was dodging while using his blade to cut down any arrow aim at him, still moving forward at the same time. Just like the light novel, when he was lost in the Sanctuary, he suddenly meet his destined girl in the river of light. The first scene was meant to have an stunning effect on the viewer, with a combination of beautiful drawing and amazing music — Just now was nothing but my imagination.

“…………”

“………..”

“………..”

A strange silence fell upon the living room. Everyone was speechless, like they didn’t know what to say. The truth was too painful for us.

With a glare, I turned to the original author. Elf’s eyes were tear up, she looked in pain, like one of her family member just died. I got a feeling that even a smallest touch will break her….can’t say anything at this point now.

Still standing, Army suddenly turned around and shakily left the room. No one could bring themselves to follow her.

During that time, the anime was still continuing. But the atmosphere was the same as a funeral. Next to me, Muramasa-senpai said: “It’s totally worthless.”

“Shhhhh!!” I knocked on my senior’s head. She said it? Is she an idiot? Everyone here already knew that.

With a cute expression, Muramasa-senpai covered her head, asked:

“…..What are you doing? It hurt.”

“What are you doing, idiot?”

“I, Idiot?”

Muramasa-senpai looked like she was hit pretty bad — that meant she still didn’t understand.

“Why are you angry, Masamune-kun? Although normally I rarely watch anime, and I can’t say that I’m good at giving review, but this dvd is clearly worthless. Absolutely worthless. Did someone take the wrong, unfinished version by mistake?”

“Do you have any mercy at all?”

It was too much!

Since some of you might not get it, allow me to explain – well, from the start, in this anime – everything, included the scene, the protagonist’s face, the setting, hand and leg’s movement is very strange.

“I know it too! This is what they called ‘fragmented drawing’, right?”

“Megumi, please be quiet, okay?”

Both senpai and this girl…this is not something you can laugh off.

I understand that as a fan or a viewer, you have the right to feel disappointed. But don’t you think you shouldn’t do that right in front of the original author?

“Please, consider Elf’s feeling. She did her best to focus on making this anime.”

“And this is the result?” Muramasa-senpai’s voice was ice-cold.

Elf’s shoulder trembled, tears fell down. “*Hic* Hk*”

“Don’t cry, idiot.” Muramasa-senpai said and paused the anime at the same time “I feel nothing at making an anime of my novel, so I never try that before. But aren’t you the same? You, who always said that you want to make the best anime with everyone? Didn’t you said you want to see people to see an anime which is even better than the original, which can moved anyone? – Look at you, what a joke.”

“Hey, that is way too much!” I grabbed her shoulder, intended to stop her. But she shot back a harsh glare, told me to shut up.

She returned her gaze to Elf –

“Look like you couldn’t reach your dream, you failed you fan, totally failure. In other words, you don’t have time to feel bad, to cry here. You should immediately re-think your process before continuing. I don’t know about anime, but surely there must be others who know about making it, there might be a way to lessen this crushing failure, there might be even something you can learn from this mistake — move. Now.”

Her voice made other terrified. It was a voice without any pity. But at the same time, it gave a boost to someone who had endured too much, who had lost the ability to think normally – her words was filled with courage and willpower. I know that she is very gentle, and what she said indeed make sense…but to tell a girl who just took a heavy mental blow that “Stop crying. Stand up after you fall down. Think of a way to make it better” ….etc… It was too much.

“Senpai, are you a demon? Maybe there is a way to say it without being so harsh.”

“Maybe.” She squatted down, looked directly into Elf’s eyes “Aren’t you the best selling author? Come back, idiot.”

She slightly slapped Elf’s forehead. Her voice was cold, but her words was burning with encouragement.

“Oh….ku….kuh…..”

Elf looked like she was burning from inside, she stood up without saying anything, gritted her teeth, use the sleeves to wipe her tears, clench her hand, shouted: “MASAMUNE!”

“Yes?”

“Comfort me!”

“….Eh?”

I stood dumbfounded, but she walked to me, took my hand, continued.

“Hold me!”

“Eh?”

“Hurry up! I’m crying!”

Indeed, her eyes were teary. Combined with the super short Christmas’s dress, it got a high destructive power.

“But, but….”

It's impossible! Of course I wanted to comfort her, to cheer her up…but aside from Sagiri —-well, I can't not do this, right?

"I'm gonna cry! I'm crying! Hold me right now! Then tell me 'It's okay, it's okay'! Let me cry on your chest! I'm doing it now — Gyahhhhhhh"

"Don't get full of yourselves, pervert! You dare to do something I could only wish for – no, something so shameless, that mean you are prepare to die, right?"

Before Elf could finish, Muramasa-senpai grabbed Elf's face, her face reddened with anger.

"It hurt it hurt it hurt!!! Is your hand made of steel or something? How much force you are using!?"

"It's what you wanted, right? Next is 'It's okay, it's okay' huh? Don't be modest, enjoy this as much as you like – good good good!"

Still holding Elf's face Senpai kept rocking back and forth. The pitiful Elf could only swayed around, moaning "It hurt…." all the way.

Well, it was the same as usual. As long as Elf returned to her normal self.

"Fufu."

Tomoe laughed. Sagiri also breathed out a sigh of relieve. Megumi also muttered "What a good friend. Their relationship must be super good."

"Who would become this girl's friend!" Muramasa-senpai let go of Elf and quickly denied.

"It hurt so much…." Still teary, Elf suddenly laughed "Honestly ~ I knew you were trying to cheer me up since you like me the most. You really are gentle, aren't you?"

"Hm, this misunderstanding is really troublesome. I think that your novel is very boring, but your dream of a wonderful story might came true, so I….have to…cheer…"

"That mean you like me the most."

"I'm not! Just listen to me!"

"Alright, thank you. I will give you a proper response."

Just when the conversation was about to over — With a *click*, the door opened. Army, who was went out just now came back, raised a hand and said: "Sorry sorry, just now was the unfinished version. This is the real white box ♪."

“…………”

Silence.

“What the heckkkkkkkkkkkkkkk!!!!!”

The angry roar of the original author rang in the room.

Thankfully, the finished volume one of “The Flame of Dark Elf” was indeed wonderful.

After the Christmas party ended and everyone had gone home, only me and Elf stayed back to clear up.

“It’s not that bad, I can clear up on my own.”

“Alright alright.” Elf happily threw an empty box into the trash can, gave me a quick peak, said: “You have been waiting, right? Now we are alone.”

“?” I titled my head in confusion “What do you mean? Well, yes, we are alone, together.”

“Kufufu, you are trying to act dumb again ❤” Elf hid her smile behind her hand “Present, present.. give me my special Christmas present.”

“I don’t have it.”

“Again, really ~”

“Now, I really don’t have it.”

“……..” Elf froze “Liar, you just said…”

“After the party is over, there is a secret present for someone, right?”

“ — When I said that, you had a surprise reaction, didn’t you?”

“Ah? That? Yes, I planed to give it to my little sister.”

“Since when I became your little sister?”

“You didn’t. I meant Sagiri! This is for her!”

Elf immediately took a heavy blow. I always felt sorry for dashing her hope.

“Ah, I see! Little sister huh? Present for Sagiri huh? Hm, I see! There is no present for me! Fine, I don’t care! I can see it from miles away!” Elf pouted, clearly displeased.

“Crap, Elf?”

“Who the hell are you? Please don’t talk with me.”

“Hey —“

Without waiting for me to finish, Elf went outside.

“What is she doing…”

She was the one who had a misunderstanding, yet she was angry with me. Still, I felt a hint of guilt, since she had taken care of me a lot.

When I was thinking of a way to make up with her, the ceiling shook. That *Thud* meant “Come here at once”

“Is she hungry? Nah, she just ate…I thought that she already sleep.”

I left the living room and went to *the locked room,* took some present for Sagiri with me on the way.

A few minutes later, I was facing Sagiri inside *the locked room*, a paper bag on my hand, Sagiri’s present inside.

“What’s wrong, Sagiri?”

“…….”

Still in her wool clothing, Sagiri stood quietly. She looked down, two hands behind her back. It’s very common for me to wait for my little sister to say something, so I didn’t rush her, only waiting in silence.

“….”

After dozen of seconds, Sagiri still didn’t said anything. In fact, her face was getting redder, probably because of the air conditional. Although my little sister looked very cute like that, but I need to make the atmosphere easier to talk.

“Sagiri.”

“Yes!? What?”

Hey hey, why are you so shaken? Did you do something wrong?

“Christmas party…went well.”

“Um.”

“Your secret is still hidden…and the present exchange —“

“!”

Hearing the word “present” made Sagiri’s shoulder trembled.

“?…Present exchange…”

“!” Trembled.

“Present.”

“!” Trembled. Again

“What’s up with present?”

“Nothing! Nothing at all!”

“Ah, I see.”

Looked like there **IS** something, but since she didn’t want to talk anymore, I will.

“The present exchange feel good too. Even Megumi caught me by surprise.”

“…Megumi-chan…is amazing.”

Sagiri muttered. While she only spoke a few words, each was filled with lots of emotion. Seemed like my little sister still need to improve her speaking skill.

“Everyone get along so well…it’s great.”

“It is. Megumi truly is great at making friends.”

“….”

“What’s up?”

“….Nii-san, you bring a new girl home.”

“Why are you putting it that way!?”

“When you talked with the big-breast Tomoe-chan…you looked like you are having a good time.”

“It’s not like that!”

“Anyway, forget it. I don’t care if Nii-san love breast or not, nor who do you talk with.”

You really are sensitive about breast, aren’t you?

“Not to mention that Elf’s anime is wonderful.”

“Um…the finished version anyway. The opening is good, the drawing is super, the main character is handsome.”

“Oh right..you probably don’t see it, but…”

“?”

“When she saw the opening, she cried.”

“…”

We both fell silence, and muttered to ourselves:

“I don’t like it.”

“But it’s great.”

Those words came from the deepest part of our heart. Our emotion which can’t be putting into words quietly disappeared right after speaking it out.

“We have to try our hardest too.”

“…Yes.”

Inside *the locked room*, a warm atmosphere appeared. Because of that, Sagiri no longer acted so nervous.

“….”

On the other, now I’m nervous. I came not only to check on her, but to gave her Christmas present. I gathered my courage and asked: “About” *2

Both of us spoke at the same time.

“—“

Both of us paused. Still hid her hands behind her back, Sagiri said:

“Ni, Nii-san talks first.”

“Ah, then I will talk then…”

Since that was unexpected, I clumsy gave the paper bag to Sagiri

Since I was so embarrassed during her birthday party, I couldn’t give her a proper present. Now, I had no choice but to try to put up my best appearance then gave her one: “This is my Christmas present for you.”

“Eh?…”

From the paper bag, I took out a pair of colorful wool socking.

“Since your foot looked like they were always cold, I made this for you.”

“Eh eh eh eh!?”

Seeing Sagiri freaked out, I asked in puzzle:

“….What’s wrong?”

“It, it’s nothing…You made it?”

“Yup! I couldn’t make a coat, but this – I can. Mom taught me a long time ago, so with some practice I could managed this much.”

“….I know. I saw you knitting once before.”

Somehow, Sagiri paled. It couldn’t be that she hated my present, right? Isn’t she have a sock fetish?

“By the way Sagiri, you are an inspiration for this.”

“…Kuh…”

Huh? Her shoulders were trembling, what was going on?

“Anyway, forget it. Try them on! They were the best I could make now! And I finally managed to make such complicated pattern!”

Somehow, hearing my boast only caused Sagiri to hesitate. I pushed and praised my sock again:

“Isn’t that good? Look, from the pattern, the feeling, the balance, everything is perfect. Not to mention that base material will ensure that your foot won’t feel restricted.”

“Kuh…kuh…”

“Although it might not meet the standard of company-made socking, it could…”

“Uhhhh.…”

“Wearing it with wool clothing would make you warm.”

“.…”

“Sagiri?”

“…It’s nothing. Thank you, I’m very happy.”

Your face didn’t say so, though. What’s with you, Sagiri-san?

“…I have my own situation too, but of course I’m happy. Very happy. Don’t worry.”

“Is that so? Okay then…so why did you call me here?”

Still hid her hands behind, Sagiri’s shoulder dropped, she sadly said:

“Ah…forget it.”

“?”

“…I lose…forget it.”

“Er…I don’t get it?”

“Nii-san…is amazing…I think”

When she said that, I could already see tears in her eyes.

In the end, I couldn’t ask why did Sagiri call me to her room.

Chapter 2

エロ ero manga sensei マンガ先生 ⑤

第二章

The first week of January,the publishing company held a New Year’s party.

“I want to eat chocolate made by my little sister!!!”

Right after I shouted that, a cheer erupted around me – of course, I wasn’t at a drinking party or anything.

During that time, I began to look around. There was a nice table, three portion of drinks and two good-looking friends nearby.

“Ahahaha, a very Izumi-kun like answer!”

Light yellow jacket, student jeans – this was Shidou Kunimitsu-sensei, a novelist, who also had a specialty in making deserts. He’s older than me, but he is also my junior. Calm, polite, and easy going…but terrible at drinking.

“Ah ~ I wanna eat chocolate made by Emily too….”

Amelia Armeria – also known as the illustrator Armeria-sensei – sat here lazily, both her legs were straight. Today she wore her hair in a tight bun, with jeans, a T-shirt, which made her look like a pretty boy.

Of course she’s still a girl, but today she chose those pieces of clothing because of the current meeting.

By the way, we were at Army’s living room, and for the reason we were gathered —-

Yesterday, when the publishing company held a New Year’s party, Shidou-kun and I were chatting with each other in a corner. Other novelist in my generation were all older, and novelist in Shidou-kun’s generation were all defeated by Izumi Masamune during the World Light Novel tournament, so they didn’t come. In the end, the two of us spent time with each other.

Well, to be frank, it wasn’t like I didn’t know anyone else. He was the one with the biggest mouth here —

“Did you see *my anime*? How is that? Isn’t it great? Totally an original work! Ahahaha, just wait, my newest novel will open up a new era of light novels!”

As you see, no one would dare/want to come close to him.

Champagne in one hand, walking around randomly – that was Kusanagi Ryuki-sensei, my senpai. He was in his twenties, with more than six years of experience, which mean he was here three years before me.

Today, he put his blond (dyed) hair into a pony tail, and wore a clothes like a character in FF15 – a black coat with silver accessories. He had an aura of a successful novelist, the way he talked and moved around showed that much. Normally, he wasn't like that, it was probably because he was so happy today.

From a distance, I and Shidou-kun looked at him, and discussed:

"Ahaha, doesn't he sound like Yamada-san?"

Yup. Totally. At last year's party, he was pretty normal. But now….

"So that's how famous light novel authors are…terrifying."

"Hm? Isn't that Izumi!?"

Crap. He saw me. Kusanagi-senpai walked up to us with shaking legs, and asked:

"Long time no see, Izumi! You're Shidou, aren't you?"

"Ah, right." "Yes, I am."

"Want a drink?"

"Please no, we are still underage." "My editor has forbidden me from drinking today. So no, thanks."

At least the editor knew Shidou-kun was bad at drinking.

Faced with our refusal, Kusanagi-senpai raised his voice:

"What the hell? You two don't want to drink with me?"

"Er…maybe next time?"

"Fine, don't you dare to forget! Absolutely not!"

"Yes yes, we won't." With Shidou-kun politely declining, Kusanagi-senpai happily replied:

"Ok, I will use my money from the anime's royalties to invite you!"

I highly doubt you would remember this evening, though.

Still, even without drinking, Kusanagi-senpai didn't leave. He asked:

“What were you talking about? Anything good?”

“Ah…yes.”

He’s so annoying.

“Let’s talk about some famous names recently. What about Mimaki En[3].

“Please stop. Just stop!”

This industry is very small, a random comment during a party can easily reach the subject’s ear – after receiving additional rumors.

He had a bad habit of badmouthing other novelist/artist that he liked. He liked “Dark Violet”, “Biblia”, “Morpheus”, but since he worked in the same industry, his feeling were a mix of jealousy and respect…

“Then how about the tax evasion. Last year….”

“I beg you, please, talk about something else!”

You only choose subjects that would bring us trouble.

“Agh damn! I want to write something like Biblia, something that doesn’t need to depend on moe girls to attract readers! If only I could write something like Da Vinci —-“

Oh my god, to say that during a new year’s party…he is absolutely drunk!

“…Izumi-kun, is this the senpai that’s*close to our age* that you talked about?”

“Yup, it was a right call to not introduce you.”

At least, not answering him.

By the way, there were only two novels that were made into anime last month. One was hisPure Love the others was The Expurgatory Flame of Dark Elf from Elf. In other words, the anime schedule was a fight between their two series.

Or – Elf’s opponent was Kusanagi-senpai. It was hard to say how it’ll turn out – but I hoped both sides could find a result that they could live with.

“……….”

When I came back to my senses, no one was around anymore…of course, all of them were trying to get away from Kusanagi-senpai. It was even harder to find someone to talk to now.

Like two unseen ghosts, the two of us gathered in a corner. Suddenly, a voice called:

“Ah, Masamune! How are you?”

“Eh? Ah, you are —“

In the place of Kusanagi-senpai was our savior – Armeria-sensei.

“I don’t know anyone here, so how about introducing us?”

Since she took on the manga for Sekaimo, Armeria-sensei was invited to this party. Since she was about our age, a famous illustrator, a beautiful girl – we couldn’t afford to waste time. So we immediately made it clear that “Army-chan is ours! Don’t try to take her away!” and invited her to join us.

“It’s nice! As expected, friends in the same industry have a lot to talk about! I still have many things I want to say! Oh right, how about you two come to my home tomorrow, we can talk about girls too! Valentine’s is coming!”

And that’s how we gathered at Army’s house.

Today is a day after the party, and in the name of ‘guy’s talk’, we gathered at Army’s house.

Maybe because she thought that ‘it would be awkward if a girl was present’ so Army wore boy’s clothing. She was like this since her time as Eromanga-sensei the Great, she must like it this way.

First topic – “Valentine’s is coming, anyone have a plan?”

“I want my little sister chocolate! It’d be better if it is full of love, a heart-shaped chocolate!”

I clenched my hand and announced loudly. Army narrowed her eyes, and answered half-heartedly:

“Yeah right, we already know that.”

“No you didn’t! No one understand how much I want chocolate from my little sister! I could write thousands of pages to describe how much I want it!”

“Slow down…what’s with this guy, Kunimitsu?”

“That’s how Izumi-kun is.”

“I see…the situation look serious.”

"Don't look at me like that!" I yelled, but Army only grinned:

"So how is your sister going?"

"Last year, nothing happened. Or rather, I didn't even see her!"

Back then, she was a complete hikikomori.

"But I saw her a few times already this year…"

I confessed, and was rejected.

"So I think I might have a chance."

Although I said that, I felt like my chances had declined.

"A chance to eat your little sister chocolate this year?" Shidou-kun added.

"Yes yes! It's **totally normal** for a little sister to give her brother chocolate, right? Nothing suspicious right? Should I ask her the next time we meet?"

*"Sagiri's ~ chocolate tasted so good ~ I like it a lot *glare* — or – the next volume has a scene on Valentine's ~ but I have no experience in receiving chocolate from girls ~ it's so difficult *glare"*

"How about you make that I want to eat chocolate face?"

"I think….it will only backfire."

"*Hic*…poor Izumi…I wanna cry…"

"I don't need your pity!"

Now I really wanna cry!

"What about you two? Will you receive any chocolate from girls that you like?"

"Hmhm ~" Army grinned "Recently, Emily's been practicing making chocolate a lot! I tried most of them too – that means she is making it for me! I win! I'm a winner this Valentine's."

She stood up and announced. But Shidou-kun rebuked her:

"Wait, normally no one lets the person they like taste their practice chocolates."

"Right! Right!"

Bulls eye! Army looked like she was about to cry, so I tried to cheer her up:

“But at least you did eat them – only a friendly chocolate, but better than nothing.”

“..Izumi-kun, you just add insult into her injury,”

“Did I?”

Only after he mentioned it did I realize I just threw a curve ball at her.

As expected, Army groaned:

“You two were jealous of me, weren’t you? So you crush my hopes immediately, right! Damn it!”

“Don’t be so sad, I don’t even know whether or not my little sister made chocolate for me. We’re even.”

“Shut up! Don’t group me and you together, damn siscon!”

“Why? I only mean well…”

“Stop! Stop now!”

Shidou-kun quickly separated us, he suggested:

“Nothing you two do here will change the situation…now…er…how about we try something else?”

“Hmm…maybe you’re right?”

“So what exactly are you suggesting?”

We listened to Shidou-kun and stopped arguing. He thought for a moment before saying:

“How about I make chocolate for you two?”

“No, you still don’t get it.”

“We aren’t just *wanting to eat chocolate*. We want to eat *a chocolate filled with a sweet and bitter love from a little sister to her brother.*”

“I told you to stop grouping me and you together, it’s gross!”

“How is it gross?! How could my pure feelings be gross!?”

Before we argued again, Shidou-kun said:

“Okay, I get it I get it. Let’s try to brainstorm ideas for our **Counter Valentine Conference**.”

“Counter Valentine Conference?”

“Yes. Counter Valentine Conference. We will think of a way to receive chocolate from the one we want.”

“Oh? And how exactly are you suggest we will do it?” Army asked, clearly interested.

“For example, Armeria-sensei —“

“Drop that sensei part.”

“Okay. Army-san wants chocolate from Yamada-san, right?”

Recently, he called Elf by “Yamada-san”. But while it was the traditional way, somehow it felt weird.

Army nodded. Shidou-kun continued:

“How about we ask Izumi-kun to do recon?”

“Me? Recon?”

“Yes. Know your enemy, know yourself and you can fight a hundred battles without disaster. Try to find out her interests, her expected outcomes…”

“I’m her childhood friend, do you think that I don’t know the answer for those question?”

“That was just an example. Okay, it’s decided then. Izumi-kun, you ask Yamada-san what kind of boy she like.”

“!”

“Then follow that sample, and by Valentine’s —“

“I will have chocolate.”

“Maybe I really could pull this off!”

Army broke into laughter.

“Hey, why does your laughter feel so weak?”

“Well, there is no guarantee that it will work, but like you said, better than nothing.”

“I see!”

I understand. This plan is much better than “acting like I want to eat chocolate”

“On the other hand, we let Army-onee-chan to do recon on my little sister, right?”

“Yes. And…what do you mean, onee-chan?”

“It’s nothing, forget it.”

Phew, I almost forgot that he still doesn’t know that Eromanga-sensei is Sagiri. I quickly changed the subject and asked Army: “Then please ask if Sagiri going to make little sister chocolate or not for me.”

“…I still don’t understand what is your little sister chocolate …is it the same as love chocolate ?”

“little sister chocolate is little sister chocolate ! A chocolate filled with feelings ofI love my brother the most from a little sister!”

Easy to understand, right? Hearing my description, Army folded her arms, tilted her head, and asked:

“So it’s just friendly chocolate?”

“Not friendly chocolate. **Little sister chocolate**!”

“Alright alright. Don’t draw so close, I will ask her for you, and I will ask what kind of boy she likes too.”

“Yes please! I’m depending on you.”

“You too, don’t forget about Emily.”

“Worry not, just let me take care of it.”

We shook our hands, an alliance had been formed.

Shidou-kun breathed a sigh of relief, and patted his chest:

“Thank heavens that you two have agreed on something.”

"….." " ……"

Both Army and I turned to him at the same time.

"What's wrong?"

"What about you, Shidou-kun?"

"Yes?"

"Valentine's, valentine's. We already told you our story, what about you? What kind of girl do you like, do you have any hopes of receiving chocolate this year?"

"That is…."

Army pushed him so hard that I could see the sweat bead on his forehead. But I only pushed him harder:

"This is a **Counter Valentine Conference**. We won't be able to help you unless you speak to us."

"No, there is no need…"

"Don't you think it's very unfair?"

"Yes yes, don't be afraid! Tell us who you like, Shidou-kun.♪"

"Say it! Say it! Say it! Say it!"

We both spoke. It would be troublesome if I were the one who was being teased, but it's fun since I'm teasing someone else.

Of course, seeing that he is a bright young man, I thought the answer is "I already have a girlfriend". Probably Army was thinking the same.

"…Alright, then I will say."

Good.

"Alright…."

“This is ~”

I was a bit surprised. Shouldn’t he already have a girlfriend?

“That mean Shidou-kun has a girlfriend?”

“No, not exactly. Actually…I still want chocolate.” He said, waving his hand in embarrassment.

“Oh oh!”

“That sound good!”

“Who is it? Do we know her?”

“I like —“

“Who?” *2

“Kagurazaka-san, the editor.”

Cough cough cough

“Sorry, who?” I tried to ask between my coughs. Had I misheard?

“I want to receive chocolate from my editor, Kagurazaka-san.”

No! It can’t be!

“Hey, who is Kagurazaka-san? Do I know her?”

Army, you should! In the showdown, you contacted her, didn’t you?

Of course, normally I would have explained, but there is nothing normal here – I was so confused. I took another look at Shidou-kun, and I asked again: “Kagurazaka-san, my editor? Are you sure?”

“Yes.” He answered with a hint of embarrassment.

“Are you kidding me? What is so great about her?”

I was so surprised that my reaction could be called rude. Shidou-kun looked annoyed.

“I only answered your question!”

“Eh, I meant, I’m sorry. But…Kagurazaka-san is…Shidou-kun, do you like her…like Kagurazaka-san?”

“What’s with your reaction? She is a beauty.”

“Well, you can say that….”

“During Christmas, Kagurazaka-san suddenly called me to a party.”

So that was the reason you left us that day?

Of course, I wouldn’t say that another possibility was that she called him solely because Muramasa-senpai suddenly decided to come to my home.

“She’s very hardworking and always does her best! She always gives me good feedback about my novels! When things went well, she shared my happiness! And she is a real beauty!”

Shidou-kun praised Kagurazaka-san non-stop, like some sort of servant.

“Sorry, I didn’t notice at all. She’s a lot older than me…”

"A lot older? Kagurazaka-san is only in her twenties."

"That is double my little sister's age!"

"She is about to become an old lady!"

"Hey, are you two trying to pick a fight with all woman over twenty?"

Shidou-kun's forehead popped a vein, and he looked furious. Who would have thought he could get this way?

"Um ~Kunimitsu seemed to be doing okay, don't you agree, Masamune?"

"Yes."

Hearing our conversation, Shidou-kun's face twitched:

"…I don't want to hear that from a pervert girl who loves other girls and a siscon, gay pervert…"

"I'm a pervert? Kukuku, I already knew that! I'm even proud of it!"

"I knew it, you still treat me that way! I'm not gay, how many times do I have to explain that before you can trust me? Besides, it's not perverted if I like my little sister! Look it up, imouto moe is the world's current trend!"

Then I finished "It's much weirder to like an old lady!"

"How dare you! That's the correct choice…if there were a normal man here…." Shidou-kun rebuked, his hand clenched.

"Ok, piece of cake!"

Army took her phone out and showed us a number – Fulldrive publishing company editor – Yamada Chris.

"How about I call him?"

"Excellent! Chris-san definitely would make a normal choice! Call him, Army!"

"Wait wait, don't call him for something absolutely trivial!"

"Too late, I already called him! Ah, yes, Onii-chan? I'm the super miracle illustrator Army-chan! Er? What's wrong? Ah, actually…er…I'm not sure, maybe I will keep drawing, maybe not. Yes, yes…eh? Now? I'm at home….okay, I'm waiting ♥"

Beep beep. Hang up.

“He said he will come as soon as possible!”

“…If he scolds you, I won’t intervene.”

Thus, our “Counter Valentine Conference between men” began.

The next day, we began to take action. In order to receive chocolate from the ones we liked, we helped each other to find out what exactly the girl’s “preferable boy” is. My target is Elf and Kagurazaka-san.

First is Elf – well, all I have to do is take a few steps outside. As usual, I brought a present (ice cream), but unexpectedly, she was working.

While she didn’t say it out loud, but from the distance to her living room, I saw the laptop on her table. Not to mention that she opened the door in normal clothes, unlike the gothic lolita dress, probably to make it easier to move around. Since it was a bit similar to Sagiri’s dress, I was stunned for a moment.

“Sorry, I heard that after making an anime, there is a lot of work to do…are you busy?”

“Nah, it’s fine. I’m about to take a break anyway.”

“It’s good then.”

In the recent months, Elf-sensei was working very seriously. She never missed a deadline before, now she played games even less. Aside from the anime The Expurgatory flame of Dark Elf which was scheduled in March, she even had to prepare for the Blu-ray, game story design, short stories – each of them was about five hundred pages long. Not to mention she still need to show up at other meetings…it’s clear that she had a focus solely on working.

She had become a hardworking genius! A perfect elf! As expected, the anime raised her responsible awareness.

I couldn’t help but stare at my “senpai”.

“What’s up? Is there something on my face?”

“No, I was thinking that Yamada Elf is so cool today.”

“..Wh, what are you talking about!?”

Elf was startled, she quickly turned away.

I sat down, took a slip of tea, then asked the main question:

“Hey Elf, what kind of boy do you like?”

“Eh? Eh? Ehhhhhhhhhhhhhh????”

Elf was reading a cookbook, but hearing my question surprised her so much that she dropped it!

“Wh, wh, what are you asking that for? So suddenly!!”

“Er, that…”

What exactly should I say? I definitely couldn’t tell the truth….okay, let’s use a so-so response.

“Just answer it normally.”

“Hah? What do you mean, normally?”

She was clueless just a second ago, but now Elf looked like she got it? Could it be that she already saw through it? I knew that she could be unusually sharp…

“I see…answer naturally huh…”

Her cheeks were crimson, and she turned her eyes away. Then she picked up the dropped book, and replied:

“Okay, I will tell you what kind of boy I like.”

“Okay okay.”

Somehow, she looked quite happy. Good, the beginning went without trouble. While I was asking in Army’s place, I do want to know what kind of boy Elf likes.

“Listen well – I like boys who – can play games that I also play!”

“ —“ I stared dumbfound. “…What’s that supposed to mean?”

So, if I try to spell it out…

“Of course, his level must not too far behind me – for example, he needs to have a character at least level 200 in Diablo 3, must be able to clear a map of Civilization 4 in God mode. In Poke**n, he also need a single rate of 1800 or higher. He must be able to play Power Pro [4], FPS [5]or play co-op in TPS [6]. He need at least twelve platinumcups[7] , can play mini-car racing an home, can fight toe-on-toe with me in Super Smash Bros [8]without using Rosetta, can act as a Game Master in T-RPG[9]can take part in TCG.[10] Every month, he need to watch at least five anime, read twenty manga and light novels. Fufu, not to mention that he —— Could focus every fiber of his being to create a good light novel"

"The rest are small conditions that don't have to be fulfilled…okay, that's a boy I like."

Suddenly, Elf gave me a charming smile:

"As long as someone can fulfill one of those conditions and truly love me, I could seriously consider dating him."

To tell the truth, I only understand half of what she said, but I do understand "what kind of boy" she liked.

Anyway, just like she declared: life's a game, she needs a boy who could also play with her.

"Thank you, I got it."

"You have to try your best!"

"Hmm?"

Why did she suddenly pat my shoulder?

"Ah…by the way…" Suddenly Elf took a peek at me, and shuttered "…Masamune, do you like sweets?"

"Why are you asking me that?"

"Just answer me! I already answered your question!"

"Er….not exactly…let me see…sweets huh….meat bun, maybe?"

"….Name some western dish."

"Western? Cake then. As long as it's not too sweet."

"Hmhm ~ not too sweet huh? Okay, got it."

"Why are you asking this so suddenly?"

However, to answer my question, Elf only closed one eye, put a finger to her lips and said "A girl's secret."

After successfully asking “What kind of boy that Elf liked”, next is Kagurazaka-san, my own editor. I had a meeting with her anyway, so I took that chance to ask some questions.

One night, I was sitting in a meeting room at the publishing company, face to face with Kagurazaka-san.

Kagurazaka Ayame had short hair and wore a suit. She’s still young, but Army called her an old lady already.

“What’s up, Izumi-sensei? Why are you laughing?”

“Nothing! Nothing at all!”

It’s not nice to badmouth her behind her back. I felt embarrassed just from looking at her.

She didn’t seem convinced, but she let it pass.

“By the way, Kyouka-san just came.”

“Crap, Aunt Kyouka?”

“Yes, she asked for an update on Izumi-sensei’s work, so I met her.”

“….!”

I immediately stood up rigid in reflex. Aunt Kyouka is the guardian of Sagiri and I, and my father’s little sister. Now she gave me two conditions in order to continue the current lifestyle.

1. Keep up both work and study. I have to show her some results.
2. Improve Sagiri’s condition.

Ah…so it’s time…

“Fufufu, don’t worry! had lot of praise for you!”

To tell the truth, her suspicious smile only made me worry even more.

“Thank you, Kagurazaka-san…so…can I ask you to check the document for Kyouka-obaa-san this year too?”

“Just leave it for your editor! Hey you guy over there, prepare what Izumi-sensei asked!”

Because of Kyouka-san’s subject, I almost forgot about Shidou-kun’s request until the later part of our meeting.

“By the way, Kagurazaka-san, there is something I want to ask you…”

Damn, it’s so embarrassing. But since I did promise him…

“Do you have a boyfriend?”

“Huh?”

Kagurazaka-san paused for a moment, thinking for a while before replying:

“Nope.”

“I see.”

I don’t particularly care, but this was good news for Shidou-kun. She’s still single!

“What about chocolate during this Valentine’s…”

“Nope.”

An immediate answer. What…next? Shidou-kun doesn’t seem like he would get chocolate.

“Um…for example…okay…just an example…I think that if Kagurazaka-san made chocolate for your novelists, maybe we would be motivated and work harder.”

“Eh? Is someone interested in them?”

“Yes, there is.”

Why do you think I waste time asking those question?

“Hm ~~”

Kagurazaka-san looked directly at me, probably wondering about this suggestion.

“…I’ll think about it.”

“Please.”

That way, even though Shidou-kun’s chances at getting chocolate increased, but I still think that wasn’t enough.

I already wanted to end the conversation, but I could almost hear Shidou-kun’s shouting

“Izumi-kun, ask the main question! Ask it!”

Alright! So I continued:

“There is another question. Can I ask what kind of man you like?”

“…This is the first time I’ve seen someone ask a love question with such a forced expression on their face.”

I really, really don’t want to ask either!

Hah…why am I have to ask about my editor’s choice in men? I did promised my junior, but… ah, so troublesome. Not to mention that I feel a lot of conflict inside me, probably because I had absolutely no interest in her love life. And to be honest, why should I be in the first place?

Kagurazaka-san thinks for a moment before answering:

“What kind of man I like? Are you trying to get references for a novel?”

“Yes yes. References.”

“Hm ~ I see. References huh ~”

She smiled, putting both her hands under her chin.

Damn it! She must has another weird misunderstanding again! Based on our previous conversation, I bet she was thinking that I asked for chocolate and what kind of man she likes because I was interested in her.

But it wasn’t the case! Absolutely not! If I knew it would turn out this way, I wouldn’t have even asked!

I tried to act calm, and continued:

“Yes, for references — see, Valentine’s is coming. My next novel is about Valentine’s too, so I plan to write this event.”

“Hmhm, got it got it ♪ Ahaha ~ I’m so often greeted by youngster nowadays.”

It’s just your wishful thinking, lady!

Of course, I didn’t dare saying that out loud, but probably the one greeting her was Shidou-kun. I looked at her, asked: “Since I need references, please answer me honestly.”

“Okay, go ahead ♪”

“Kagurazaka-san, what do you think about novelists who are younger than you? For example, will you consider going out with then?

It’s done! Done! Thank me, Shidou-kun! I threw away my dignity to ask that question for you!

“………”

Kagurazaka-san closed her eyes. I was afraid that she would be angry, but …

“This question goes with what kind of man I like, huh?”

She smiled. A smile that was totally different from the one before. Much calmer.

“If there is someone who could give his work everything, then no matter how old he is I think that he is praiseworthy. If I go out with him…I will be happy.”

This was her carefully worded response.

“I understand.”

Seeing how “mature” Kagurazaka-san was acting, a teenager like me could do nothing aside from retreat.

A few days later, we gathered at Army’s home again to hold a **Counter Valentine Conference**. The participants were the same – me, Army and Shidou-kun.

I made my report first:

“— That concludes my report about Elf.”

“So Emily like guys who *could play video games with her*? Well, I certainly can! Someone who can put everything to work? I can do that too! I draw manga, I take care of anime. I fit her description, don’t I? Right?”

Army put a finger to her chest, and grinned from ear to ear.

“Yeah, it fits you…”

What I didn’t say is that it fits almost anyone with an interest in anime, manga, games, music, and film….

“Alright alright, this time I will definitely get chocolate! Nice job, Masamune! As reward, I will give you chocolate when February 14th comes. Of course, just friendly chocolate, so don’t expect anything more.”

“I know it already. Friendly chocolate as thanks, isn’t it?”

“What? You don’t want it?”

“I do! Please give it to me! Please!”

After I begged for it, Army finally agreed. She added:

“Be honest with yourself. Just make sure to thank me.”

“Yes yes! Thank you! Thank you very much!”

Seeing how much I lowered myself, Shidou-kun took a step back, asked:

“I, Izumi-kun…you will accept friendly chocolate even if it comes from a girl you don’t like?”

“Of course I will!”

I have never receive chocolate in my entire life! Yes, I love little sister chocolate the most, but friendly chocolate is fine too.

“I see. Well, I myself only need chocolate from the girl I like, no one else.”

“Then you won’t have any.”

Army teased. Shidou-kun smiled wryly before turning to me:

“About that…Izumi-kun…about….”

“Ah, I asked Kagurazaka-san too.”

“Thank you! Thank you so much!”

“Well…I did promise you…”

Seeing how happy he was, made me felt that the humiliation I received before was worth it.

“ — That’s all.”

Just went I finished, Shidou-kun clenched his hand, and shouted:

“No boyfriend. No problem with dating a younger novelist! Kagurazaka-san really said that?”

“Not exactly word for word…”

“Doesn’t matter his view, his job, his income. Oh, so noble! Truly, a holy maiden!”

“Eh…that might be a bit too much…”

Today Shidou-kun is so weird…

“Good! That means I have a chance! I could ask her for a date, right!”

How could I know that! You go ask her yourself!

Of course I didn’t say that out loud. I need to keep my manners and all.

While I wanted to give advice to my junior, I have no interest in my editor’s love life. If she was someone else, then I would have joined in.

“Shidou-kun, maybe I shouldn’t say it like this, but now things are up to you.”

“Yes yes! Thank you! Thank you!”

“I don’t know what else I could do…take care of the rest.”

Saying that, I felt so damn tired and dropped my shoulders.

Finally, it’s over! Mission accomplished.

No wait! I quickly looked up:

“Wait Army! My little sister chocolate!”

“Oh right right. I did ask Sagiri for your sake.”

My little sister Sagiri is a hikikomori. She barely left her room, I barely had a chance to see her, much less talk about love.

Now it’s time to ask Army-sensei! As the one who drew the manga of Sekaimo, she is the one who could access *the locked room* easily. And *Army-Onee-chan* can ask Sagiri about anything, including love.

Seeing how nervous I was, Army asked:

“Masamune, before hearing my report, answer a question. What kind of girl do you like?”

“Yes? Why? I only need to know what kind of boy Sagiri likes.”

“What’s the matter, just answer!~ Then I’ll answer your question.”

“….”

I don’t get it, why does she need to know what kind of girl I like? Did she have a conversation with Sagiri in *the locked room?*

Forget it, it doesn’t matter if I tell her anyway.

“Okay, you only need to know what kind of girl I like, right?”

“Yes. And I forbid you from answer with mylittle sister ”

“Eh? What’s wrong with that?”

“If you answer that you like your**little sister**, that gives me absolutely nothing on your character. Think carefully before answering.”

“Hm…what kind of girl I like huh…”

Hmmm…so sudden. I have to think carefully, this is no laughing matter. I think for a while, until an answer came to me.

“Trustworthy…and faithful.”

“…What? That was unexpected…but not much different if you said you like your little sister…but at the same time, your little sister doesn’t exactly fit that description.”

“Is that so?”

“Ah, could it be that you like…” She blushed, pointed at herself.

“No. You are trustworthy, yes, but it’s not like that.”

“Oh? I was thinking that maybe you like me, but are still trying to beat around the bush.”

“That’s your imagination.”

Yes, with her talent – if I didn’t already have someone in mind I would have fallen for her – she is trustworthy and cute.

“Anyway, I got the trustworthy part. What about faithful?”

“I don’t want to answer this question.”

“Hm ~ a bit suspicious. But since you don’t want to, okay.”

Army seemed like she realized it and didn’t push anymore.

After listened to us, Shidou-kun suddenly said in a serious tone:

“Trustworthy…and faithful…! Ah, I knew it!”

“Hey! Your misunderstanding is even worse than Army!”

How can I convince him that I’m not gay?

“Anyway, that was my answer, now I want yours. Tell me what kind of boy Sagiri likes, and the chances for me to get chocolate.”

“Ahaha” Army grinned “For now, Sagiri doesn’t plan on making chocolate.”

“I see.”

“Since the kitchen is your territory, she said she won’t trespass in it.”

“Ah.”

Sagiri knew that the kitchen is something that “my mother” left me, so she never uses it when I’m not at home. And since she hid in her room when I was home, she couldn’t make chocolate.

“Wait Army…even a hikikomori could still buy chocolate from the Internet! How about…”

“I asked her that too. She said Unless I make it myself, I won’t be able to win – so no buying .”

“What is that supposed to mean? The one Sagiri loves has a lot of girls falling for him – like that?”

“I don’t know whether or not it was the case, but I got a feeling that it wasn’t the case. I think that she meant I want to make it myself and give it myself .”

“Isn’t that clear? She planned to give him chocolate herself!”

“Who knows? Anyway, your chance of getting little sister chocolate is pretty much nonexistent. Just give up.”

“Well yeah. I didn’t have much hope from the beginning anyway.”

When I was depressed, Shidou-kun attempted to comfort me:

“Izumi-kun, but you still can receive Gay chocolate from Eromanga-sensei.”

“Neither Eromanga-sensei or I are gay, how many times do I have to tell you that?!”

He still thinks that Eromanga-sensei is an old man…

“By the way, did you ask Sagiri if she has a boyfriend?”

“Nope. We had an agreement, so I didn’t ask her that question.”

“What! This is important to me!”

”But I did ask her what kind of boy she like.”

“Tell me, please.”

“Alright. With a very embarrassed expression, Sagiri said —

“….I’m…always…always …causing trouble for him”

“That was what she said.”

“Ha..my little sister is so troublesome.”

“I agree completely.” She sighed.

And so – Valentine’s had arrived.

“In the end I couldn’t think of any countermeasure.”

I was always causing trouble for him? What exactly does that mean? I cook for her everyday, I do the housework everyday, I spoil her everyday…it seemed all I did was the opposite of what she said.

“I give up.”

Not to mention that “that kind of boy” probably means “one guy”. It’s useless to try to mimic someone else in that situation.

Anyway, little sister chocolate is out of the question. Thus, Valentine’s is meaningless now. Well, at least I get friendly chocolate from Army.

So, that day, me (and half of the class) spent the day in a depressed mood.

During lunch break, Tomoe came and asked me.

“Mune-kun, what’s wrong? You look horrible.”

Takasago Tomoe, a real beauty with long black hair.

“That’s because I didn’t receive any chocolate today.”

“Fufufu, I see ~ so Mune-kun has someone in mind, but that person doesn’t seem to care about you.”

“It’s so embarrassing, you don’t have to say it out. And…why are you laughing like that?”

“Eh? That…”

She’s still trying to hide something behind her back, then suddenly she gave me a box.

“Here, a present.”

“!? Tomoe-san? Could it be —“

“…Open it” She said, blushing slightly.

“T, Thank you…”

With a hope filled my heart, I tore up the wrapping paper and opened the present…

Inside was the chocolate that Tomoe made for me —- nope, it wasn’t.

“Valentine’s Choice” – Author: Miura Isao

“A Light novel?”

“Fufu….a light novel about Valentine’s is used as a present for a light novel author during Valentine’s…it’s a new experience, isn’t it?”

“And that’s why….you gave me the novel Valentine’s Choice by Miura Isao-sensei?”

“Yes. Do you like it?”

“It makes the misunderstanding even worse!”

I thought that I had finally received chocolate! The first chocolate in my life that someone gave me! You got my hopes up.

“Hey hey, what are you getting angry for? Of course you should have read this book after reading The Sacred Blacksmith .”

“Then you should have given me Christmas’s choice — no no, that’s not the problem! Saying it is rude to Miura Isao-sensei, but today I don’t want a light novel! Please, just give me friendly chocolate is fine!”

I yelled, but Tomoe only laughed it off:

“Sorry sorry – but today I’m not giving you friendly chocolate.”

“We’re friends, why not?”

She stopped smiling and raised a finger:

“No no, if I gave you friendly chocolate, that’s just friendly chocolate.”

“??? Why is what you’re saying so difficult to understand?”

She calmly took the “Valentine’s Choice” from my hand, gently said:

“Because I’m a literature girl.”

After school, I went with Tomoe to the front entrance.

“Oh, by the way, I need some references for my romantic comedy novel, can you answer some of my questions please?”

“Sure.”

“I’m looking for What kind of boy do you like , can you answer me?”

“Um? What kind of boy I like? He better like going with me to the bookstore, and chatting about light novels with me.” She answered without hesitation.

“Ah, I knew that you’d prefer someone who shared your hobby.”

“Yes yes, that’s important. Oh, by the way, I don’t mind his height.”

“Crap, why are you looking at me? Are you calling me short!”

“You get mad whenever I mentioned it…”

“I will definitely get taller! I drink milk every day! I will reach 180cm before graduation, just you wait!”

“It’s not…never mind. I don’t really mind anyway.”

Just when we arrived at the entrance, a voice called to me:

“Ah, Onii-san.”

“Eh?”

I turned and saw a girl in middle school uniform – Megumi.

“Megumi?”

“Yes ~”

She run to me, her pig tails swinging back and forth. Then she played the role of “little sister’s friend” and rubbed her face into my chest: “Ehehe ~ here I am.”

“What are you doing here?”

I asked with a puzzled expression, Megumi smiled

“Do you still need to ask ~ this is my Valentine’s chocolate for you.”

She gave me a well-wrapped bag of chocolate.

“!”

I was stunned speechless for a moment.

“For, for me?”

“Really ~ who else would I could give it to?”

“But…is…it really for me?”

I can’t believe it. I can’t believe that finally, I have received chocolate from a girl, from my little sister’s classmate.

“Of course. You helped me a lot, how could I not remember my dear Onii-san ~”

She pushed the bag to me. I could see many smaller chocolate balls inside – she probably made it herself. They looked normal, but in my eyes they were sparkling.

“For you ♪”

“Thank..thank you!”

With trembling hands, I took it from her. Tears overflowed from my eyes.

“Aha..ahahaha..I’m so happy! I never knew that receiving chocolate during Valentine would make people so happy.”

Of course, I knew it’s just friendly chocolate – consider Megumi, she probably gave all boys she know one bag each. But it doesn’t matter, I’m still happy.

“Ehehehe ~ seeing you happy made me blush.”

Megumi played with her hair, took a look at Tomoe then asked:

“But Onii-san probably got a lot of chocolate already, right? From Tomoe-chan, Muramasa-chan and Elf-chan.”

“Nope. Tomoe only gave me a book! This is the first chocolate I’ve received in my entire life! I really have to thank you!”

I said honestly. Maybe Megumi will be surprised, but it’s fine.

“I…I see.” She looked down, turned away “So it’s your first time…ah, I felt so embarrassed! It’s all your fault!”

Still blushing, Megumi hit me in the chest a few times.

“Wh, what’s wrong?”

“Nothing at all! Hm!”

She turned and began to walk away. I was thinking that she would leave, but Megumi looked back and laughed mischievously.

“Prepare yourself, Onii-san. I will steal many of your *first times*later ♥”

Then she immediately ran away.

“What is she talking about….”

I was blushing furiously, while Megumi muttered to herself “I see…it’d better if you said it sooner….”

After saying goodbye to Tomoe, I returned home. Since I got Megumi’s chocolate, I felt a lot better – no matter how many times I think back.

In short: Event – good. Megumi – sly. Present – Nice.

I never thought that just because she gave me chocolate, I no longer felt that I couldn’t handle Megumi. In fact, I even found myself wondering “Did she like me?” – “No no, I’m already in love with someone else”

Not to mention things will never that easily.

“Looks like I’m quite easy to handle.”

I laughed softly and put a hand on my house’ doorknob. The cold I felt quickly pulled me back to reality.

This was not a pleasant topic – every time I went home, I was a bit afraid of opening this door. I’m afraid of seeing the cold, empty entrance. Every time I saw it, I remember the day when mom passed away due to a traffic accident, the day when dad and I started living alone.

But now I have more or less accepted this fact, I no longer cry because of that – because I still have Sagiri. Sometime, she slammed the ceiling, to acknowledge my return. There was a time when she herself came down and greeted me.

Today is no different from the others. Izumi Masamune pushed the door opened, and said “I’m home” and —

First was the sound of footsteps, then two voices came at the same time:

“Welcome back, Masamune-kun.”

“Too slow! Where have you been? Were you trying to flirt with someone on the way.”

Coming to greet me were Muramasa-senpai in her kimono and Elf in an apron.

"…"

This unreal scene made me stunned for a moment, before breaking into laughter.

"What are you two doing? Elf, did you came in from the second floor? Seriously, don't use Sagiri's room as your entrance."

"Nah, Sagiri only hates going outside, it's fine."

Well if you say so. Besides, it's true that Sagiri only doesn't want to go out.

"And you too senpai. If I remember correctly, you should have already burn through your monthly allowance and couldn't leave Chiba, right?"

That was a perfectly normal reason for a high school student, but to think that she is a famous novelist with absurd high sales.

She scratched her cheek, and answered:

"It's true…I totally forgot about…Valentine's…so I had to beg my parents for next month's allowance."

To think such a delicate girl like her could forget something…anyway, that's how she is.

Elf patted Muramasa-senpai's shoulder, and added:

"Muramasa is going to sleep at my house tonight, okay?"

"Yes. I'm free tomorrow, there is no need to go back during the night."

Spending the night?

Seeing my puzzled expression, she explained:

"Masamune-kun, to tell the truth, I don't have any money to buy chocolate…so can I cook dinner instead?"

"Senpai…you're going to make dinner?"

"As long as you allow me to use the kitchen that mother-in-law left behind."

Yes, that was the only thing mother left behind for me, but it's not like I will never let anyone else touch it. And mother would probably be happy if someone else used it.

"Let's go with it." She smiled "Everyone, let's eat together. I will make Sagiri-kun's portion too."

Sagiri-kun huh…seemed like everyone was getting along well.

"It's great."

Like my family was together again. Warm and happy.

After confirming the course of action, she opened the door and went out.

"I'm going to get ingredients."

"Ah, please wait for me to get money —"

"Don't worry, everything is already prepared."

She left. Next to me, Elf pouted.

"She acts like she did everything herself, but she's only going to take it out of my fridge."

"Ah, sorry. I troubled you again."

"I don't mind, you're always like that. Do you remember that you used all of my printer's ink? How about paying that back?"

"….Got it."

I couldn't say anything back.

"Ah, by the way, I made chocolate like you requested. Were you looking forward to it?"

"…Request?"

Why didn't I remember it? Not to mention…

"You….plan to give me chocolate? Didn't you meant that….everyone eating together?"

"You! Damn! Idiot! Idiot idiot idiot!" Elf shouted, while thrusting her index finger at my chest with each words "I'm giving it to you! Giving! To! You! A super beautiful girl is making handmade chocolate for no reason other than giving it to you! So you have to show your gratitude! Do! You! Get! It?"

“I…I got it.”

I think that I’m the only guy in the world who was receiving chocolate and a lecture at the same time.

Elf opened her hands wide, said:

“Really — to think that you still manage to misunderstand, what an idiot! Just like those protagonists in light novels! You are one of the candidate for my future husband!” She looked down a bit before continuing “I’m only going to marry someone I love. So listen well, I will make it as clear as possible, clear enough for an absolutely dense light novel protagonist to understand — This is love chocolate.”

“________-“

“Do you get it now?”

She smiled. A beautiful, and innocent smile that was full of life.

On the other hand, I felt like someone just hit me with an iron rod. In any romantic novel, this event should only happen at the end, during the climax. To say it now is something only the girl named Yamada Elf could do.

And so, I could only answered with one word “Yes”, and my heart totally calmed.

At that time — *Bang bang bang* — the ceiling shook.

“Alright, go.” Elf suddenly said.

“Sure.”

When I passed the stairs, about to walk into *the locked room* – suddenly

“…Eh?”

The door was open? What’s going on? Did Sagiri open it? Wait, there was something on the floor.

I carefully walked over and saw a note which said ↑ .

“???? Is it telling me to go inside?”

While I didn’t get it, but I pushed the door. With a *creak*, *the locked room* opened.

“!? Wh, what the heck?”

I couldn’t help but yelp. *Something* strange and cute was in front of me.

“….”

Human-shaped. A body made of many cardboard boxes, all had the word ‘amazon.co.jp’ written on them. About my little sister’s height. The highest box showed me her face.

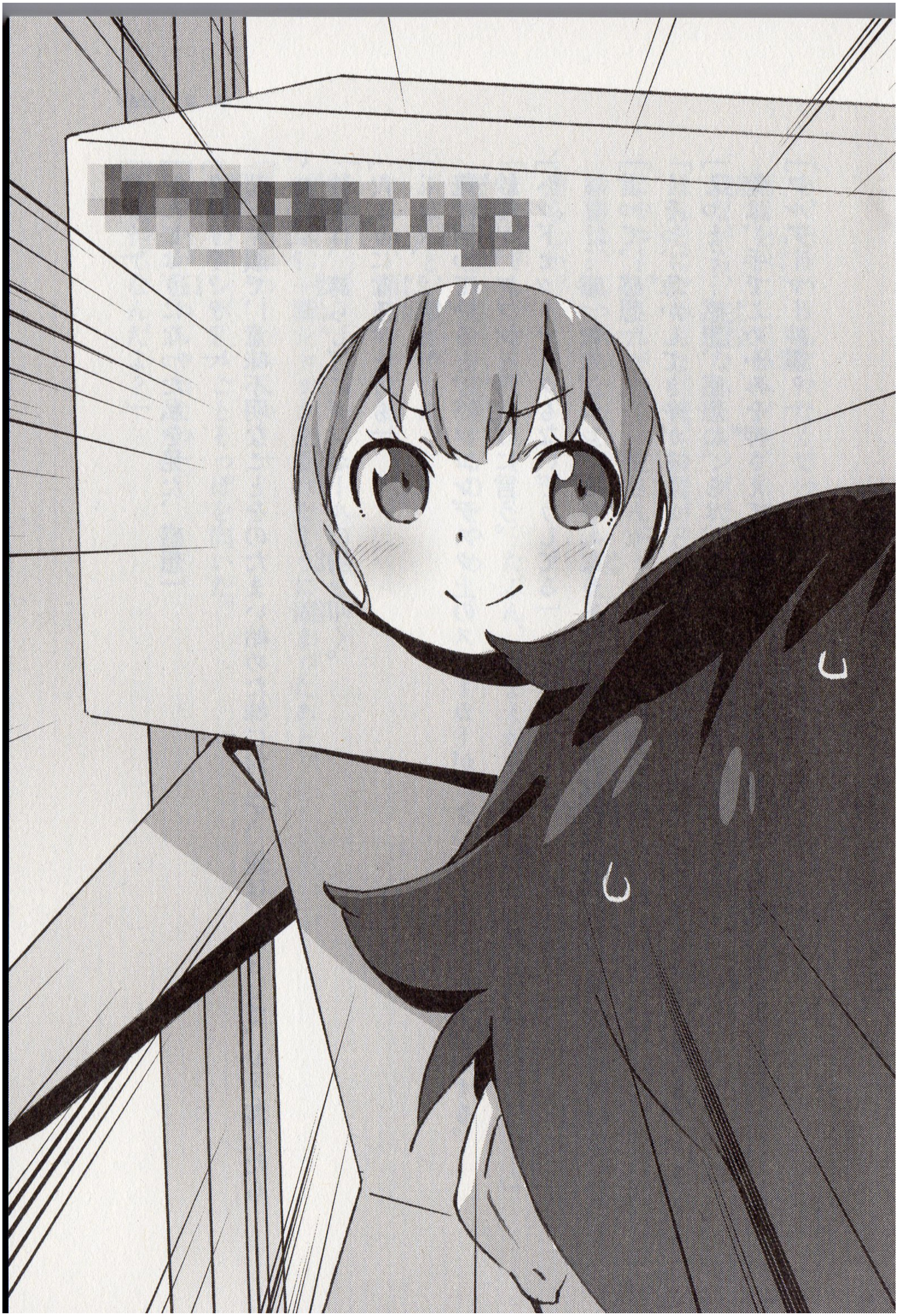
“…Wh, what the? Sagiri?”

“How is that?”

It jumped, and turned around, stretched her arms and legs, said.

“Strong!”

“…………………..…”



……………………………

I had no idea how to react to this situation. Maybe dozens of seconds later, *it* finally tilted its head, and asked: “What do you think?”

“Yes?”

“What do you think seeing me in this?”

“????”

She looked proud of herself, but what exactly should I say?

Sagiri proudly patted her chest-cardboard box, said:

“I could wear it! No problem.”

“Uh…ummm.…”

The voice was coming from the computer’s speaker. Sagiri laughed:

“I put the headphone inside too.”

….Amazing…but what next? What should I say next?

“So, what do you think!?”

Crap, she was pushing me.

“Er…what do I think huh…I think…think.…”

I started to feel a headache, so I said the first thing in my mind.

“Full Armor Sagiri?”

“Not that!!!”

Her eyes turned into >.<, and she looked displeased. That meant she didn’t like that name, it looked like I was bad at naming things.

“Sorry, but I don’t know what you expected me to say.”

“Nii…san.…Nii-san.…. ~~”

Sagiri blushed furiously, she looked so moe!

“But…If I have to say…it’s probably not the answer you’re waiting for” I couldn’t hold it anymore and broke into laughter “It’s so hilarious!”

Sagiri was stunned for a moment, like she just took a heavy hit. Then she turned away.

“Ah, I see. Hm! Now the plan is a mess!”

“What plan?”

“Who cares!” She raised a hand “Help me take it off.”

“So you couldn’t take it off yourself….”

I helped her take the box on her head and hands off, keeping the legs and body boxes intact. Sagiri took something out and after a bit hesitation, gave it to me.

“…Here.”

“For me?”

“Just take it.”

“Er, okay.”

I already forgot about Valentine’s at this point, so I just took it without thinking.

I only realized when opened it.

“This is…stockings?”

“Yes. Take a look.”

“Wow, nice! Oh, this is a character from **Sekaimo.** Did you…you made it yourself? Even Cospa[11] couldn’t do something like this.”

I think back to all those stockings with image of He*** Kitty or Pr***** Cute. But this one in my hands is much better.

Hearing that, Sagiri became much happier. She began to praise her work:

“Hmhm ~ only I could make this.”

“Yes…you’re getting better and better at this. It’s great.”

“Hehe…I win, finally!”

I was a bit disappointed that there is no “little sister chocolate” during Valentine’s, but –

“Now you are better than me. I will treasure it.”

“Um.”

“It’s still cold outside…be sure to wear it outside.”

“Er? Wearing this little sister stocking outside?

People will see me even if I wear long jeans.

“It will be warm…right?”

………….

“No problem! I will wear it! I will wear it even on the subway train!”

Tomoe gave me a light novel. Megumi and Army gave me friendly chocolate. Muramasa-senpai gave me a dinner. Elf gave me victory chocolate. My little sister gave me a pair of stockings — This winter is no longer cold and lonely anymore.

“By the way, why do you like afaithful girl , Nii-san?”

“Hmm?”

The sudden question surprised me for a moment.

“That was…Army-chan, she…she told me without me asking…so…I …don’t really want to know.

“Sagiri, the reason —“I answered slowly. This wasn’t anything secret, just answering Army back then would ruin the atmosphere.

“Is because I don’t want to lose my lover again.” I gently smiled “I hope my lover could always be by my side, so I like faithful girls.”

“Hm ~ is that so.”

“You too, be careful to not get a cold.”

Chapter 3

第三章

Now it’s March, a few days after White Day.

Sunday morning, due to some *reasons*, I was cleaning my utterly-trashed-living room, fuming the entire time. The smell of high school students were everywhere, and it made me very uncomfortable.

“Ha ~ I’m so bored….”

I sighed, but suddenly there were the sound of footstep coming from the stairs.

“Could it be Sagiri?”

I turned to it – nope, not Sagiri. It’s Elf. She came from my balcony, via *the locked room*. Really, I already told Sagiri to not let people use her room as entrance.

“Good morning Masamune! A cute girl is coming to play —“She caught the sight of my hideous living room, groaned and covered her nose “Alcohol smell? What is going on?”

“First thing first, I didn’t drink.”

“I knew that already. What I meant is that! That *weird thing* over here!?”

She pointed at the sofa, where a male teenager was sleeping. He was also the source of the smell.

“That one? As you see, it’s Shidou-kun.”

Still covering her nose, Elf came closer to take a look, and said:

“Eh? Kunimitsu? Wow, what an expression. I didn’t recognize him.”

He looked like a corpse, with spit coming out of his mouth. He was totally unlike the normal bright teenager I knew.

“What happened? Why is he laying here? Is he still alive?”

“Alive? Yes. And why….well, do you remember White Day a few days ago?”

“Yes yes. I remembered that Kunimitsu liked the old hag editor, and he made chocolate for her.”

“Yup, and this is the result.” I pointed at the sofa in disgust.

“Thing went wrong? Ah ~ I told him to not get his hopes up…so that’s why he turned out this way?”

“Well, even Kagurazaka-san wouldn’t rejected him outright, but the short version is like this: he just gave her the chocolate, and she was like thank you, **everyone** will take a bite . Then yes, everyone in the editorial department took a bite until all of it was gone.”

It was so sad. So heartbreaking.

“That was all I knew. Shidou-kun showed up at my house in this state already.”

“What a weak mind. I would certainly be unaffected by that. Worse case, I would only treat it like a temporary loss. We can always retry later, so why waste time being depressed? What an idiot.”

How cruel.

Elf looked like she lost interest, and sighed:

“Masamune, do you know? In the vast universe, there was a poor girl, who gave her love chocolate away but received nothing in return.”

Someone was trying to complain here…

“Wait wait, I did give you a present for White Day.”

“You gave me something only suited for some old man…never mind, the taste is good enough. But I bet your present to every girl was the same, right?”

Elf said, and slightly lifted her hand to touch my lip.

“No no, each person had a different present.”

“Hmhm, then ~ tell me exactly.”

“Why?”

“Because I said so!”

Elf pouted. It didn’t look like she would explain herself. I had no choice but to comply.

“…First, Muramasa-senpai. I gave her a collection of my short story.”

“I know. I asked her. She asked for that present herself, didn’t she?”

“…Yup. And… Tomoe got an autograph from Muramasa-senpai and her story.”

“I see. If I remember correctly, she is a fan of Muramasa.”

“About Kagurazaka-san, I tried my best to give her a somewhat finished manuscript. Megumi…well, she didn’t receive anything, but…well….”

“Stop stalling, what happened?”

“I don’t remember it very well, can we skip that?”

“No. Spill it.”

Elf grinned. I gave up and told her about Megumi’s White Day.

I took a stack of paper from its place next to the television and said:

“Take a look. Megumi gave it to me before White Day.”

“What is that? A girl gave you a present before White Day?”

“Just take a look.”

“….” Elf began to read. Inside was a list, with colorful illustrations.

“The right to go a park with Onii-san ♥ (More details will be discussed later)” “The right to go watch a movie with Onii-san ♥” “The right to ask Onii-san for an introduction to ten famous authors” “The right to sleep at Izumi’s house ♥” “The right to ask Onii-san to come over and sleep at home” “The special present if Onii-san can make Izumi-chan go to school!”

“This….”

I could see Elf’s face twist in horror. Yup, she got it alright, but I need to explain anyway.

“See? This is *present list* that Megumi gave me, which is —“

“…She wrote *White Day’s present*. She gave you a list? Seriously?”

“Yes.”

“Wow, what a shameless girl.”

Megumi is not exactly shameless like Elf said, but yes, she indeed went overboard by asking for presents via a list. I was speechless when I received this list too.

“…Looks like the price for that chocolate is coming. I need to repay this list before May.”

I had planned to repay her, but this list proved too difficult. There was nothing I could think of.

“Hmm ~ I see! Ha, maybe it’s a good thing. You would be dead already if Masamune made a similar list.”

“Probably not though.”

Elf happily took the list, and pointed at a line:

“It’s decided, I want this.”

“Eh? Wait, I planned to give Megumi this…”

“I want this for my White Day gift. Give it to me, Masamune.”

She didn’t listen to me at all. Well, fine. She helped me a lot, now it was a chance to repay her. I nodded, and smiled: “Alright, what do you want from that list?”

I looked at her finger, my eyes widened:

“This one…!”

“Ehehe…!”

Elf’s request was “The right to go a park with Onii-san ♥ (More details will be discussed later)”

“I’m looking forward to it, Onii-san ♥”

She laughed, which made my heart skip a beat.

“The next is ~ planning for our date…well, that was the idea, but the smell is horrible, I’m in no mood to talk about it.”

Although she said that, Elf returned the list to me.

“Let’s continue our talk from earlier. I can understand Kunimitsu’s situation, but…” She pointed at a corner of the room “What about the stranger who is drinking beer in a corner?”

“..Well —“

I followed her finger and saw a man in his twenties surrounded by an unbearable atmosphere.

He had long, blonde-dyed hair, with a black shirt, and silver accessories. At first glance, he looked like a model for Me*'s Knuckle[12]. He must be quiet good looking, but today his beard was unshaved, and he had deep black eyes and looked frail.

He's a –

"Novelist, my senior. Kusanagi Ryouki-sensei."

Unlike his looks, his novel was quiet good, especially in the romance genre. Recently, one of his novels, "Pure Love"- which is a story about the love of a high class lady – was adapted into an anime. Because of his looks, no one in his family knows(They probably wouldn't believe him anyway) that he's a novelist.

Hearing his name, Elf immediately recognized it, and slammed her hand together:

"Kusanagi Ryouki – ah, the one whose anime aired at the same time as my *Dark Elf*, right?"

"Yup, this's him."

He still had a great time during the New Year's party –

"See? He doesn't look much different from a zombie now. He's been like that since he **returned** here with Shidou-kun – right, senpai?"

What I was trying to say was: you two, should **return** to your homes.

Kusanagi-senpai looked up slightly, took a slip of beer, and muttered:

"…Who, who…how dare you speak to your senior that way?"

Zombie-appearance, reeking of alcohol. Disgusting. But I'm not afraid, I replied:

"You two spewed all over my living room, I can't stand it anymore! I'm angry!"

My room's atmosphere is absolutely unbearable. What would you do if my little sister blamed me?

"…I didn't spew."

"It doesn't make it any better! Bring your friend with you on the way out."

A moment of silence. Kusanagi-senpai took another sip, and said:

"Give me some money, I'm broke."

“Eh? Why do you sound like Muramasa-senpai? You’re an adult, why did you leave home without your wallet?”

“Yesterday. Shidou asked me to go drinking with him” He glanced aside, and continued “While I was visiting the toilet, he asked for a luxury ¥120.000 bottle.”[13]

“Ah ah….”

I could almost see the scene from that moment.

“Can you believe it? Of course you can’t. I only knew about it when we asked for the bill!”

“Well, Shidou-kun will be very different after he drinks, anything can happen….”

“…I have to say it beforehand, I didn’t know that this guy would turn out this way.”

“It’s none of my business, I wasn’t there anyway.”

By the way, how did those two get along? They only meet at the New Year’s party, but now they can go to a bar together.

“In short, I’m broke” Kusanagi-senpai raised his hand “So give me money. For a taxi, a cab or a subway train, anything.”

Did you hear? He said *give* not *lend*. Horrible. Maybe it was because of the alcohol, or maybe not…

“Just go home!” I coldly refused his shameless request.

“Don’t be mad, it’s not good for your body” He whirled around. “Look, this vomit spot is worth ¥120.000, do you feel better now?”

“Feel better my ass! Get out!”

I was on the verge of shouting, but this drunkard didn’t comply. He just picked his beer bottle up and put it down.

…Actually, it’s not like I didn’t have any idea why Kusanagi-senpai turned out this way.

“….It can’t be helped…” I sighed, accepted this fact “Damn…I have no choice…but to take care of this”

Elf patted my shoulder:

“Need a hand?”

"Nah, I can take care of it myself. Thanks for offering, anyway."

"It's okay. Wait for me to get changed."

"Thanks a lot."

I have to say it again – whoever marries her later will be very happy.

Thanks to Elf's help, everything went smoothly. We pulled the carpet out and brought it to the cleaning shop, threw all the beer bottles away, used deodorant…and reminded Sagiri to lock her windows.

"Phew…half way done."

"It will probably take a while before the smell is completely gone."

We should start cleaning.

By the way, Shidou-kun was left at the corridor, Kusanagi was sitting like a dead man, surrounded by bottles (we had no idea where he kept them).

"Senpai, stop it! You're getting worse!"

"Last bottle…otherwise, real life only makes me want to die…"

Fine fine, have it your way – that was what I planned to do, but Elf's curiosity peaked up, and she asked:

"Hey Masamune, what happened to him? How did he turn out this way?"

"…You're better off not knowing."

I did know something, but I had no reason to mention them.

Elf looked at senpai, then at the poster for **Pure Love** (which she just got from the garbage bin), the Blu-ray DVD in its creator's lap before slamming her hands together.

"I got it!"

"You don't have to say it out loud!"

But it was too late. Elf already spoke:

“Because the Blu-ray of **Pure Love** sold like crap, his heart took a heavy blow and turned out that way!”

“I told you to stop saying it out loud!”

“If I remember correctly, its sales were about two hundred —“

“Stop! I beg you, stop please!”

Among light novel authors, sales are forbidden words. Two authors with the same sales might be able to talk to each other happily. Or if everyone is in a good mood, we could use it to let off some stress.

But that was only in a perfect situation. Just thinking back about my first meeting with Elf: we were arguing to the point that a fight could break out at any moment.

Thankfully I was there to diffuse the situation, otherwise…

“Kukuku…so you dare speak about that in front of me…”

Thing will get ugly.

After that there were ten minutes where both sides exchanged cannon balls back and forth, but I’m not going to write it all down.

Kusanagi-senpai cried:

“Actually, I have no problem with the quality of the anime…as the original author, I think that the anime is good enough, everyone has given it their best…as long as I could see my characters moving around, and speaking….it’s enough…but…but….but it didn’t sell good enough!!”

“Yeah yeah I know.”

I half-heartedly replied. That’s a downside for being a young author. If only I had a junior who was more lenient (and did not vomit in my room).

Still, I couldn’t put myself in Kusanagi-senpai’s shoes. None of my novel were adapted into anime, I could only look at him in admiration. Thus, I said nothing and only listened. Just like when Elf was depressed (even for only a moment), there was nothing I could do.

Kusanagi-senpai said in a hoarse tone:

"…Izumi, do you know that I was called NEET at home?"

"I see."

I could understand why. Light novel authors worked their ass off by sitting in front of the screen, the same as any other NEET. He is not the only one who was treated that way. Shidou-kun and I are still students, and he is young enough to not raise any concerns, but if we were a bit older we would be treated as NEETs.

"I thought that as soon as I got an anime, I could proudly raise my head to announce my job within the neighborhood, and could freely ignore some old hag's stupid question *Where are you working now?*…so I tried my best, hoping that an anime would change my life…But… Why! Why are the sales so bad!? Why do people who didn't even read my book bash me? I don't care if you speak bullshit about me, but don't say anything about sales! Those damn affiliate blogs should just die!"

Still sitting down, he yelled.

"Yeah yeah, I know it's hard."

I felt bad just from listening. To think that my future might turn out this way made me unable to look away.

"But what I hated the most is those guy who gave uninformative reviews! Aaaagrh, it made me not want to work anymore! They said *It's good as long as you have anime* or *It's good as long as someone likes it* — like hell it is! I'm a human being too! Those trash couldn't understand me! Trash, trash! All of them! Ohhhh….and I'm one of them too…."

He broke down crying, his hand still clicking on the phone.

"God.Damn.It! That was what I got from pushing myself to write light novels! Izumi, do you hear me!? Aaaaghhh!!!"

Crap, he was consumed by his own darkness.

At this time, Elf pulled my sleeves, and asked quietly:

"Hey Masamune, he is an adult, but he looks pretty funny when crying."

"Please be quiet."

Don't pour oil into a fire.

"But ~ I understand him. I understand him a lot." Elf suddenly nodded a few times, then became depressed "…Masamune…please listen to my complaints…my *Dark Elf* – Blu-ray version only sold around thirty thousand boxes…”

“I see – only thirty thousand…what?”

Did I heard it right? I thought her sales would be ten times higher than *Pure Love*.

“I thought I could sell around six hundred thousand boxes…then take advantage of the situation to sell six millions copies of the novel…”

She said the same thing during her first meeting with Muramasa-senpai. I thought she was joking, but it seemed like she wasn’t.

“Ah…I can’t do it after all…I can’t reach that number…the anime is finished but my novel’s sales are only about two hundred thousand…”

Only about two hundred thousand! She’s still not satisfied! She said that without any malice!

“….”

“…..”

Of course, both Kusanagi-senpai and I could only stared in disbelief.

“Brat….” Senpai was trembling with rage, just like me during my first meeting with her “Izumi, I can’t believe that you can still keep calm.”

“Nah, I’ve seen something similar a few times before, so I’m somewhat immune.” I smiled wryly, and explained “She truly wanted to reach the top of the light novel industry, and truly believes that no matter how big the difference is, that she could beat that distance. She could happily announce that: the best light novel needs a combination of good story and beautiful illustrations. So just now, she didn’t mean to upset you. She truly was sad because her book didn’t sell well enough – what an idiot, right?”

Kusanagi-senpai’s brow knitted:

“Tch, you make me feel like an idiot too…never mind, I’m going to take a nap.”

“Take a nap at your own home!”

….And that’s how a precious day of mine was wasted.

As you see, this morning was bad enough – but the sad part is, what happened in the afternoon was nothing more than a disaster.

Vomit-senpai and drunkard-in-love went to face the final boss and received a sound beating – that was my tactful translation of the truth. Like I said, it happened in that same day.

Let me rephrase my situation: I'm cleaning the absolutely dirty living room with a beautiful girl in sports clothing. During that time, the suspect in black was still sitting on the floor surrounded by beer bottles. There was also another drunkard in the corridor, so the entire first floor was covered with the scent of alcohol.

Suddenly, the door gave an ominous *creak*. My whole body tensed, and my eyes locked on the moving doorknob.

"—-"

Elf was curious too. The door was locked, I'm here, and certainly Sagiri was above. Yet the doorknob was slowly moving.

Like two protagonists in fighting novel, we both turned to it. After another *creak*, it swung open, and someone come in and saw our home. Instead of two happy siblings, she saw a horrible-looking home.

"……….."

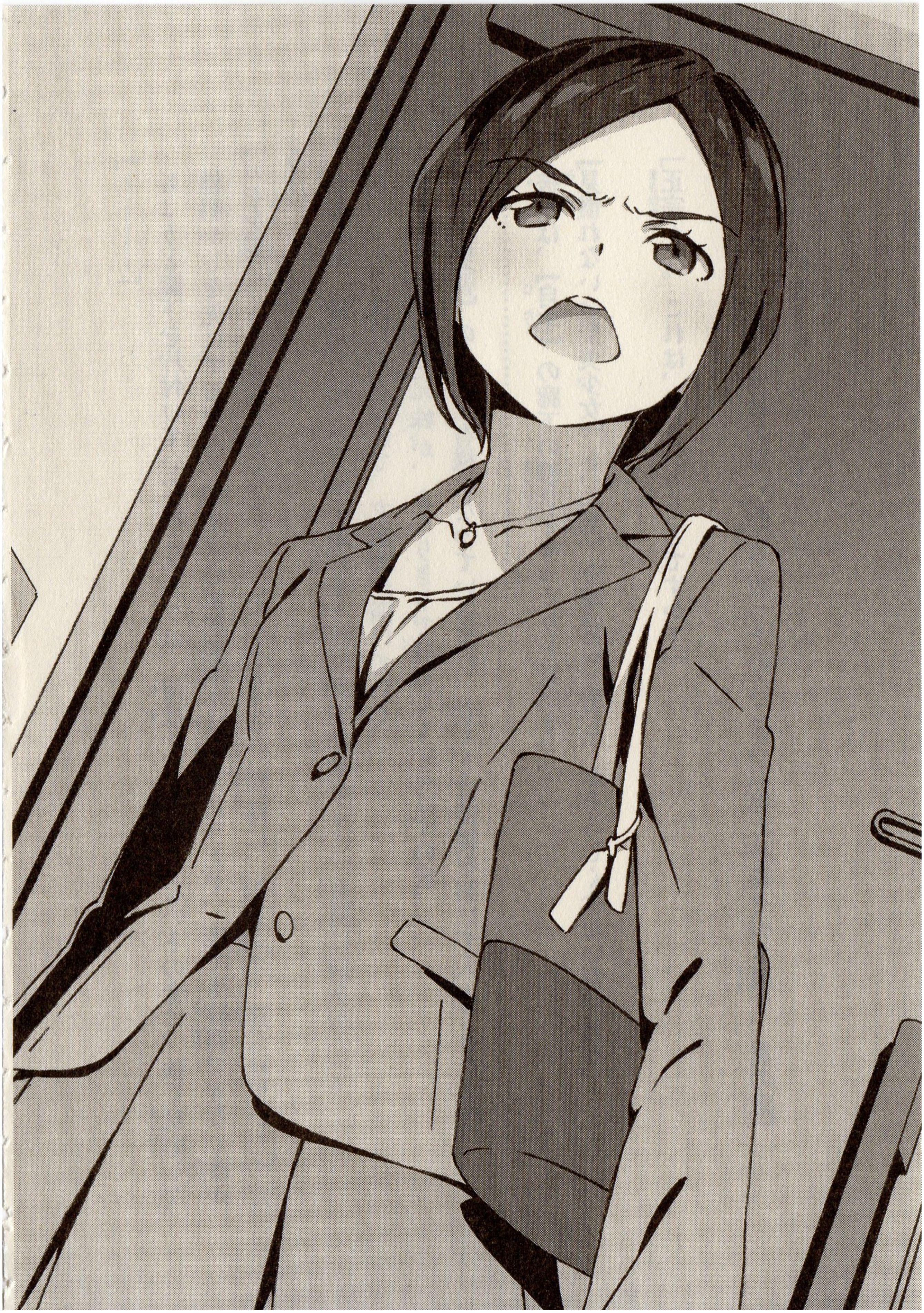
Seeing how messed up "her house" was, she glanced at "the strange blonde beauty" and "her nephew", and coldly asked: "Masamune-kun, what's the meaning of this."

An ice-cold, unbearable aura – that was "the enemy who wanted to separate Sagiri and I."

"Kyo-Kyouka-san? Why are you here?"

I felt like a student who was suddenly interrupted by his teacher while chatting with friend in class. Even Elf could only ask in a stiff tone: "Masamune, this is —?"

"Our sibling's guardian."



Yes. Guardian. My father’s little sister. She looked young – in fact, young enough to be mistaken as a university student. People would probably believe her if she said that she is about Shidou-kun’s age, not to mention that she truly is younger than Kagurazaka-san. She has short, black hair, small, delicate eyes, and a calming atmosphere. Today, her western clothing clearly emphasized what kind of person she was.

Without any hesitation, Kyouka-san came to Elf, and introduced herself:

“Pleased to meet you, I’m Izumi Kyouka, and you are?”

“I’m Yamada, his neighbor.” Elf looked back at her eyes, and replied.

Amazing, she dared to meet Kyouka-san’s eyes. I certainly wouldn’t.

Hearing that, my aunt only said:

“I see. I’m sorry Yamada-san, can you please go back home for now?”

“Ara? Why, may I ask?” Elf replied, her body language clearly suggested that she prepared to engage.

I was already covered in sweat, I quickly muttered to her:

“Please, just today. Go back home.”

“Fine.”

Seeing my expression, Elf understood and went home.

And then —

“Masamue-kun.”

“Yes!”

We faced each other in the living room. Kyouka-san began to lecture me:

“I’m your guardian. I agreed to let you two live together to let this child have an easier time, so she could recover. I did not allow you to host an alcohol party at home and try to engage in impure relationship!”

“Yes yes! You’re right! Completely right!”

She was right, so I could do nothing but nod. We both were still minors, so if we wanted to do something – no, if we wanted to do anything, we needed her approval. There is no way we sibling could be allowed to live alone.

Reality is not like a light novel.

Shidou-kun, Elf and Kusanagi-senpai had left. With one glare from my aunt, Kusanagi-senpai almost pissed himself in terror. So he quickly said goodbye and ran away with Shidou-kun. Damn, at least help me explain!

"Ah um…Kyouka-san…Why are you here today? Normally you would call me before …"

"You made it sound like if I came without warning, something impure would happen."

She coldly answered, and then turned to the living room. Or rather, the living room which I was cleaning, which means it still had some bottles left.

"I will ask you again…what is the meaning of this?"

"No…there is a reason —"

"I'm not here to hear your excuse."

"Crap…"

Crap. Crap. Crap. She thought that I hosted this party. It was hard enough for her to agree letting us siblings lived together, but now we are in serious trouble.

"I didn't drink a drop. Only those two before drank! They drank themselves to sleep then came here – that is the truth, please believe me!"

"….Really?"

Kyouka-san looked at me with her dagger-like glare. I felt like Medusa herself was looking at me, my body couldn't move at all.

"….Yes."

But I didn't dare to turn away. I could only steel whatever courage I had to face her.

And then —

"!"

She brought her face to my chest

“Wh…what?”

A sweet fragrance entered my nose, and made me panic. But, she didn’t notice, she drew herself back, and smiled slightly: “Alright, there is no alcohol smell. Yes, I believe you.”

“Phew….”

I let out a sigh of relief, but she immediately let out an “it’s too soon to celebrate” aura:

“Just now….is that neighbor your girlfriend?”

“No, she is just a neighbor!”

“Neighbor? At that age? She is still a kid!”

“In that case, both Sagiri and I are still kids too…”

Frankly, I didn’t need to hide anything. She’s our guardian, the same one who stood in our place when dealing with the publishing company.

“She only come to play and help me clean up.”

“Really? Did you plan to do something impure when I wasn’t here?”

“Absolutely not! Sagiri is above, please don’t say something strange!”

Really, why does my aunt get her weird ideas?

Maybe because I raised my voice, she looked a bit mad. Using her hands to cover her mouth, she quietly said “Sorry.”

“Anyway, do I need to lower my voice? This damn doctor said I would only make things worse. Should we make sure this child doesn’t know I’ve arrived?”

“I think that Sagiri already knows though. But yeah, please lower your voice.”

Without checking, I’m sure that the moment my aunt arrived, Sagiri had already hid inside her blanket and trembled. But true, she’s very afraid of my aunt, so maybe lowering her voice would be better.

“Ok, lower your voice then.”

She narrowed her eyes. Suddenly, I felt that the temperature in the room drop several degrees.

“Now I will tell you why I came without warning.”

“!”

“Yes, the main reason is to monitor you two, but —“

Periodic testing

Periodic testing. A month earlier than the previous one. Before I explain this, allow me to say something regarding my aunt, Izumi Kyouka.

Izumi Kyouka. My father’s blood-related little sister. Our guardian. She’s the only blood-related family member that Izumi Masamune has at the moment. Her characteristics were like what you have probably seen – in light novel’s term, she’s an “ice queen”, who froze everything wherever she went.

You might say: then she is an enemy. But no, not really. Since I was a child, I already had no idea how to handle her.

During my childhood, something like that happened a lot —

“Kyouka-chan, let’s eat.”

“I hate you!”

“I know. Not let’s eat”

“I hate you the most!”

Her relationship with Mom – my blood-related mother – is bad. Really bad. And she always glared at me with a sharp look.

Even now, when I saw a girl in a high school uniform, especially a sailor uniform, I remembered back then, when “Ice Princess” would stare at me.

Back then, I was always hiding behind my father to avoid Kyouka-san’s gaze. She knew that in her brother’s house there’s someone she hated, so why did she still come? I couldn’t make heads or tails of the situation.

After Mom passed away due to a traffic accident, my father and I lived on, and supported each other. Then she came to my house more frequently.

“…Eh…Kyouka-san…why are you…here?”

Hearing me, she looked down, and said:

“I came to see if Masamue-kun has behaved or not, to see if you took care of the house or not.”

“…Yes?”

I thought she hated me?

“Oh my, Nii-san…no matter how busy you are, letting Masamue-kun eat fast food is not good…what a useless man.”

“..You shouldn’t….badmouth…Dad.”

“Hmm, I haven’t even started yet. He is always like this, acting wildly and arbitrarily. See, there were only two people at home yet the room – er? Clean?”

“…I could do that by myself.”

“…You clean up the house by yourself?”

“Dad…isn’t good …at that…”

“….”

I could still remember her terrifying gaze from back then

“…You shouldn’t bother with too much trouble. As a child, you should enjoy school, enjoy playing with friends. That’s how a kid should be.”

“…I, I only did what I felt was necessary….Sorry.”

“You aren’t in the wrong, so there’s no need to apologize.”

My parents were generous, so it was kind of rough having an aunt who acted like the step mother from Cinderella.

But….

“Masamune-kun, welcome back. You must be hungry, I already made dinner”

“A, thanks…”

But thanks to her, I didn't have to spend much time alone at home. By the way, because Kyouka-san's cooking still (compared to Mom who was a cooking teacher) is not very good, I managed to learn how to cook.

Oh right, after Dad married mother – Sagiri's blood related mother – the same thing happened over again. Okay, that should be enough. In short, I had no idea how to handle Kyouka-san.

And the reason I treated her like an enemy was because: she once tried to forcefully bring the hikikomori Sagiri out of the room. It backfired horribly and made things worse. Even now, she was making conditions for us to live together – one careless move is enough for me to be separated from Sagiri.

That's why she is our "enemy".

We returned to the living room and sat down in front of each other.

"Periodic testing? But it's only March."

"Did I ever said that this year's periodic testing will be in April?"

"…"

Nope, she didn't. But the first periodic testing —

"Last year, in April you said *The next Periodic testing will be in a year*."

"It's March already, not much different. Beside, testing without warning would yield better results.

"…Why…"

"Is there a problem?"

"No, not really…"

I was surprised, that's all. There's nothing to worry about.

"No problem at all."

She nodded, and said:

“There are two conditions in order for you to keep living like this, do you remember?”

“I do.”

Keep working and studying hard. You need some achievements.

Improve Sagiri’s situation.

Those were the conditions that I accepted. As long as I fulfilled them, we could live together. I could use my own methods to handle Sagiri’s hikikomori situation. But if I failed – then what awaited her would be Kyouka-san’s way. I’d be separated from her, and we couldn’t see each other anymore.

Back then, we had an agreement.

“I remember.” I nodded.

“Very well” My aunt coldly said, and then took a stack of paper out “Then let’s begin.”

It felt like the room was getting colder and colder…

“Masamue-kun, are you prepared?”

“….Yes.”

It was like I was standing in the middle of a snow storm, my stomach began to hurt.

She took the first paper out:

“First, your studies.”

“Here are this year’s results.”

I handled her my report card. She took it and began to read.

I’m not boasting, but my score was quiet good. During the previous periodic testing, it managed to pass her judgement.

Kyouka-san looked up, said:

“I’ve meet with your homeroom teacher.”

“Eh? Why…”

“Because….” A slight pause “I’m your guardian.”

She quietly coughed, and continued:

“I have spoken with your homeroom teacher, your studies are going well, and there’s nothing to complain about. Good achievements and academic behavior. The only thing needing to be improved is the fact that you didn’t join any club or team.”

“Sorry, I don’t have time…”

“Because you have to take care of your *step sister* and working, you couldn’t enjoy a normal school life.”

I don’t like it. The way she spoke irritated me.

“In order to keep my current life style, I tried my best – even work or *my little sister*, both are very important to me. So I have to pass your test…I’m very lazy, and without trying I would be a useless man. Sorry, please understand.”

“…”

She only listened in silence, then said:

“I don’t have anything else to add…ok, pass. There is no need to check the progress of your studies anymore.”

But her eyes closed for a moment, and then flared:

“A child that couldn’t live like a child, a child that had no choice but to live like an adult – I hate the one who caused this situation.”

“…What do you mean?”

“I hate seeing you have to try so hard.”

She hated me. Then why did she agree to be our guardian? While I’m grateful – I couldn’t understand her.

“Next is about your job.”

She looked at the paper in her hands again. What was written on it? Did she inspect me? She didn’t believe me? This test seemed to be more difficult than I thought, I needed to be careful.

“Here are the related documents.”

I gave her the documents I had prepared.

“This is the royalty report from my publishing company. Here is a tax report that my editor and I filled in.”

“Let me take a look.”

Oh crap, it felt like I was facing a tax collector agent. What am I afraid of? Could it because of Kyouka-san’s eyes? If she asked “Are you trying to evade taxes?” I would probably kneel down and beg for mercy.

“Okay, no problem.”

She put the stack of documents down, and said:

“About your work ethic, I’ve had a talk with your editor.”

“…”

Kagurazaka-san did mentioned it to me…somehow I got a bad feeling.

“Did you talk with Kagurazaka-san?”

“I hate her!”

Immediately reaction.

“Ah, I see.”

Well, I wouldn’t say I like her either, but she does help me a lot.

“It doesn’t feel right badmouthing your coworker, but I get the feeling that she is the type of dirty adult who takes advantage of children for her own gain.”

It’s actually the truth though. Brutally honest, but it’s the truth.

Did my aunt think that way because I’m a kid? But work is work, it’s clear that coworkers will sometimes take advantages of each other.

“If Kagurazaka-san is a dirty adult, then I’m a dirty child, right?”

“I hate the fact that you have to work so hard! Working as a light novel author only brings bad for you!”

Really, Kagurazaka-san, what exactly did you tell my aunt that gave her such a bad impression?

“But, Kyouka-san, what about….”

“I know. Per our agreement, as long as you pass this test, I will not say anything about your work.”

Keep working and studying well. You need some achievements.

“Did Kagurazaka-san say anything else about my work?”

“*Newest novel sells very well.* That’s all.”

Straight to the point, huh?

“And *From the beginning, I knew that if I worked together with him, we could archive great results! Actually, we are trying to increase advertisements now!*”

“….”

I don’t know what to say anymore. She should have said something else instead. My aunt wasn’t much different from a member of PTA, she wouldn’t be fooled by this.

“What are you afraid of? Straighten up! You’re a man, aren’t you?”

“Yes.”

I quickly sat upright.

“…Are you afraid?”

How could I not be?

“Don’t worry, there’s no problem here either. At least your income is stable.”

You made me worry even more! What next then? Something horrible, isn’t it?

“Next is about your novel.”

“Yes?”

“Why are you so surprised?”

“Ah, well…this…my novel, it’s.”

My aunt slowly took a book out of her bag, and spoke its name clearly “The Cutest Little Sister in the World”, by Izumi Masamune.

“Crap!”

My body twisted, like I just took a blow to the stomach. Kyouka-san continued:

“Illustrator: Eromanga…”

“Aggrhhh!!”

I couldn’t take it anymore, and I asked weakly:

“Can you please not say it so loudly?”

“You mean I should lower my voice?”

“Ah, no. Forget it.”

She looked at me, her eyes were saying “Brat, I’m talking to you, listen carefully”, then she said the last part: “The Cutest Little Sister in the World – volume 3 The Date The Heart-Racing Moment between Me and my Little Sister “…………Kuhhhhhh”

My whole body trembled in embarrassment.

Frankly speaking – recently, I saw some light novels with some very embarrassing names. What were those authors thinking, naming them like that? How would they introduce their novel?

“…You feel embarrassed from hearing the title, the author and illustrator’s name? Is this novel *that embarrassing* to you?”

“No! It’s my child! I’m proud of it!”

I quickly corrected her. As long as she didn’t misunderstood this point.

Seeing how nervous I was, she pushed on:

“Is that so? Then why are you reacting this way?”

I fixed my posture, looked directly at her, and answered:

“How should I put it…?

I didn’t mean that it’s embarrassing when someone else reads my novel, but letting a normal person read it still somewhat embarrassing for me. I couldn’t stand it if someone else were to show me my “The Date The Heart-Racing Moment between Me and my Little Sister”

This is a strange feeling. Both complex, hesitation but also happy.

“And…”

“And?”

“Seeing a beautiful, serious woman like you saying *Eromanga* was a bit…”

“Wha…!” For the first time, Kyouka-san’s expression changed. Her cheek reddened, and shuttered “Wh, what are you talking about! Beautiful, serious….don’t…don’t make fun of me!”

I probably pushed the wrong buttons, she looked mad. I need to explain, fast.

“No, I mean *Eromanga (name),* not *erotic manga*.”

“I, I know that.”

“Eh? You mean —“

“This is that child’s penname, isn’t it? I knew that already…even before you knew. The previous holder of that penname is the one I hated most. I still hate her even now!”

Bah, why do you have say it that way.

The previous holder of Eromanga-sensei is mother – Sagiri’s blood related mother. Somehow, the relationship between Kyouka-san and her was really bad – looks like she already knew who the real Eromanga-sensei was from back then.

“What do you mean?”

“It’s nothing, forget it. There are several issues that I need to address about your novel.”

She said and picked up “The Date The Heart-Racing Moment between Me and my Little Sister”, and showed it to me.

You need certain achievements.

Income is normal, next is checking the content of my novel – to see if I had an achievement or not.

I swallowed hard, and asked:

"…Yes, please ask."

"Good – then, your novel's opening narration of *The Cutest Little Sister in the World* is A siscon love comedy that Izumi Masamune tried his best to write . What's that supposed to mean?"

What is that supposed to mean? Crap, even if you ask…

"I meant I tried my best to write….about a siscon love comedy…"

I could felt my face getting hotter.

"Oh? Siscon here mean sister complex, isn't it? This word doesn't exist in psychology, but I think it means the situation when someone has more than brotherly feelings toward their own sister…"

"Er…that…"

What can I say? This is a difficult question! The truth is, "siscon" used in *Sekaimo* is a bit different from the usual "siscon" or "sister complex" that otaku used daily. It would be very troublesome if I didn't clarify that, but doing so would take a lot of time — "A siscon love comedy means two siblings happily playing together."

I said. My aunt said "Huh", and looked at me like she had trouble believing her own ears.

"That means the girl and the boy on the cover are brother and sister?"

"…Yes."

"Love comedy…that mean siblings falling in love with each other?"

"..Yes, that's about right."

"Even if they are brother and sister."

"Especially because they are brother and sister"

"….I don't understand."

Interrogation. She was interrogating me!

“Then…this character is suspicious…” she pointed at a certain female character ”What is Sukebeningen-chan?”

“Sukebeningen-chan…is her online alias”

“Are you serious?”

“I am.”
Terrifying! Why am I trying to explain my novel’s content to an adult who has prejudice towards otaku?

Of course, Kyouka-san didn’t stop there. She continued:

“Hmm ~ in other words, your newest novel is about the love between a brother and sister – okay, I get it.”

Look at her eyes! She didn’t even treat me like a human anymore!!!

“Yes it is, but it’s not something impure erotic like you imagined!” I desperately tried to explain “A pair of siblings live together, but their relationship is very bad. Then thanks to a sudden chance, their situation slowly changes – my novel is about that – not something impure!!”

“Really? But people wouldn’t know that without reading, would they? Look at the cover. Read the opening narration. Anyone would think it’s something perverted, don’t you agree?”

“….”

I couldn’t say anything back. The hell, is my aunt a sadist?

“Besides, you have no proof that this novel Has any negative effects on its readers, right?”

“Not really, some negative effects are pretty much guaranteed.”

“Eh? What?”

Wow, just now her voice sounded so cute.

“Masamue-kun, what did you just say?”

“…..”

I’m dead! I slipped something I shouldn’t!

“Er, you are asking whethermy novel has any negative effects on its readers, right? What I’m trying to say is it has both positives and negatives, that’s what makes it interesting.”

I had no way to dodge this question, so let’s hope for the best.

“Is that so?”

She glared at me with her dagger-like eyes. I quickly added:

“It’s just a bit. A tiny bit of influence! Still within the acceptable range of the company! Beside – it’s not like it will have immediate effects.”

If Elf heard me say something so negative, she would probably sigh in depression.

“Ok, that’s all I need to ask from you.”

“Then…about the results..?”

Kyouka-san closed the stack of documents, and answered:

“You pass.”

“Wah!”

My eyes widened in surprise. Kyouka-san took *Sekaimo*, and said:

“I haven’t read it…but at least I knew it isn’t a failure. I only need to ask you for confirmation.”

“…Hah?”

You knew? Then why did you put me through this interrogation?

She finished putting everything back in her bag, and kept talking:

“Testing complete. Pass.”

“You pass.”

“Eh?” I passed? “What does that mean —“

She slowly looked at the ceiling

“Next is testing for Sagiri.”

“Wh – I’m not the only one who takes the test?”

“You were the only one who took the test last year, but this year Sagiri has to take it too. I have spoken with her.”

“!”

That means…Sagiri did say she had a promise with Kyouka-san…so this is what she meant…

“How could this test be completed only by you? Besides, I said it last year.”

Improve Sagiri’s situation

“I will see if there is any improvement. Let me see if Sagiri could rejoin society.”

Extra: Izumi Kyouka’s Investigation

実録 和泉京香の職業調査

『ライトノベル作家』という職業について、正宗くんの同業者と会話する機会があったため、調査を試みた。

調査対象：草薙リュウキ
性別：男性　年齢不詳（二十代中盤か?）
住所：東京都新宿区　同居者1名
代表作：『びゅあらぶ。』

——貴方はライトノベル作家ということですが?
ホントすぐ帰るんで!　こいつも連れて帰るんで!　すんません!　ごめんなさい!

——帰る前に、調査に協力してください。
えぇ……?
※説得に2分ほどの時間を要したが、問題なく協力を得ることができた。

——ご協力ありがとうございます。では、最初の質問です。なぜライトノベル作家になろうと思ったのですか?
……なんだっけな。

——正直に答えた方が身のためですよ?
和泉、おまえのネーチャンまじ怖いんだけど。眼が本気なんだけど。

——姉?　そう見えますか?
違うんスカ?

——違いません。それで?
オレがラノベ作家になったのは……てっとり早く稼げそうだったから。
あと、なんのが楽そうだったから?　前のシゴトがめんどくなって、ヤメて、しばらくプーしてたんだけど……
弟がシゴト始めたら、親と親戚からの風当たりがえらいことになって。そんでまあ色々あったんだけど、書いて、出して、なった。

——正直な回答ですね。たいへん参考になります。
はあ。

——ペンネームの由来は?
本名の流輝と……あと苗字が三種の神器っぽいイメージだったんで、草薙ってのはそこから。

——ライトノベル作家になってよかったことは何ですか?
金。金がすべて。

——ライトノベル作家になって「これは厳しいな」と感じることは何ですか?
ファンの振りをしているアンチ。苦しんで死んでくれ。

——どんな作品を書いているのか、簡単でいいので教えてください。
ピュアな恋愛小説。

——はい?
ピュアな恋愛小説を書いてるんだけど……。

——（酒臭い派手な身なりを見て）正直に答えた方が身のためですよ?
嘘じゃねーよ!!　失礼なやつだな!!!

——では、その……ピュアな恋愛小説とやらを書くために、心がけていることは?
『夢』を書くこと、じゃねーの?
ホントはそんなわけねーけど、そうだったらいーよなーってのを、ホントのことみたいに書くんだよ。そしたらオレとおんなじこと思ってるやつらがそれを読んで、オモシレーって思うわけ。んで、オモシレーって思うやつらがいっぱいいたら、売れて、アニメ化して、オレ儲る。OK?

——ライトノベル作家というのは、良い仕事だと思いますか?
いいや。

——断言しましたね。何故ですか?
いまのオレの姿を見て、良い仕事をしている人だって思うか?　若いラノベ作家志望者たちには、夢を叶えた挙句がこのザマだけどホントにいいの?　って言ってやりたいね。ラノベはオワコン!　これからはライト文芸の時代だぜ!

——なるほど。では何故、良くないと思う仕事を続けているのですか?
もう取り返しがつかないから。
いまさら引き返せないから。
ちっとも潰しがきかないから。
読者が新作を待っているから。

——たいへん参考になりました。お帰りください。
じゃあな。次は、あんたがいないときに、遊びに来るぜ。

Since it’s a rare chance to meet Masamune’s coworker, let’s investigate “light novel author”.

Investigation target: Kusanagi Ryouki

Sex: Male

Age: Unknown (presumed in his twenties)

Address: Shinjuku area, Tokyo.

Notable novel: Pure Love

— Are you a light novel author?

I’m going back now! I will bring this one with me! I’m sorry!

— Before you leave, please cooperate in providing information.

…Eh?

(Only showed his reaction after about two minutes)

— Thank you for your cooperation. Then the first question, why did you become a light novel author?

Why…then?

— It’s for your best interest to answer truthfully.

Izumi, your big sister is so terrifying! What kind of killer eyes are those?

— Sister? Do I look like his big sister?

Aren’t you?

— No. Answer my question.

I became a light novel author because…because I like it, not to mention I thought it’s a quick way to make money. My previous job was too tiresome, so I quit. After staying at home for a while, my younger brother got a job, then my parents began to press me to work, so I wrote something to publish.

— Good. Very helpful answer.

Yes?

— Where did your penname come from?

From my real name…Kusanagi…and, well, you know? My name made people think about three sacred treasures, so I pick the penname Ryouki — Is there any benefit you get from being a light novel author?

Money. Money is everything.

— As a light novel author, is there anything you fear?

What I fear most is when my editor's face darkens.

— What genre did you write? Make it short please.

Pure love.

— Yes?

I write pure love stories.

— (looking at his alcohol-smelling clothing) it's for your best interest to answer truthfully.

I'm telling the truth! You're so impolite.

— Then…what does writing pure love mean…?

I write about "dreams". I write about "things that could never happen, but it would be great if they did". Then I give it to everyone. If it sells well and is made into anime, then I'm rich.

— Do you think that this job is okay?

No, not really.

— Why do you say so?

Look at me and answer: who would think that this job is okay? Seeing me like this, who would want to take this job? What I wanted to say is: the light novel industry is going down! Go to school or something.

— Then why didn't you find something better?

Because I have to follow it through. Because I couldn't go back. Because I couldn't do anything else. Because my readers are still waiting.

— That’s very informative. Now go home.

Goodbye. I will make sure you aren’t at home before coming to play again.

Chapter 4

エ ero manga sensei ロマンガ先生 ❺

第四章

Before my aunt could get out of the living room to go to *the locked room*, I hastily called to her: “Please wait! Even if she wanted to, Sagiri can’t take your test now!”

“Why? I only wanted to see if she could rejoin society?” She replied, already holding the door handle.

I still didn’t understand what she meant by “rejoin society”, but without a doubt, it must relate to making Sagiri leave her room. Of course she couldn’t, her hikikomori couldn’t be cured so easily.

“Did you…already talk to her?”

“I did. Last year, during your test, I had a talk with her. I need to see if she is ready to rejoin society.”

“Really? She said so?”

She said she will *rejoin society*. I couldn’t believe my own ears.

“Exactly at last year, June. She was hiding behind the door when she promised me, you could check with her yourself.”

June? It was when our dream was beginning.

“What exactly was that promise?”

“You can ask her yourself.”

So she didn’t want to tell me.

I couldn’t allow her to meet Sagiri now – but what could I do about it? I desperately tried to stop her:

“That means her test is scheduled in June, right? Then you should wait until June, it’s a yearly test after all!”

“………………..”

She glared at me.

“Crap…”

I was terrified of that gaze when I was small. Trying to calm down, I said:

“Even though it’s a test, there are preparations that need to be done…beside, this is the first time I heard about it…It’s a family matter, why did no one tell me!? You are too much!”

“— Family matter, you said?”

“Yes yes! Family matter, but no one told me. I think it’s too much!”

I knew that I was just pulling excuses out of my ass, but whatever

“Please! Just a little more time!”

“Okay.”

“Yes?”

She agreed? I froze, my eyes widened in shock. Kyouka-san coughed, and continued:

“…I agree. I will let you have a little more time.”

“Thank you very much!”

She agreed that easily?

“But…I can’t wait that long. In June, Sagiri will be going up a grade.”

Up a grade? Wait, does *rejoin society* mean *go to school*? Are you kidding me? It’s too difficult! My little sister could barely come out of her room, she couldn’t possibly go out of the house!

Seeing my will waver, she raised a finger, and announced:

“The testing for Sagiri will commence on April, 1st . Not a single day later – Are we clear?”

“Yes.”

“Then it’s decided.” She said, and began to put her shoes on. Before she left, she turned back and said:

“By the way, *the love between brother and sister* that you wrote about, I think it’s disgusting.”

“Because I’m also a **little sister** .”

Having said that, my aunt left.

After that, I rushed toward *the locked room*, both to tell Sagiri about our conversation just now and to discuss what to do next.

“I wonder if Sagiri is okay.”

She was terrified of Kyouka-san, so I was a bit worried.

Taking a deep breath, I was about to knock when – with a *click* , the door opened. But no matter how long I waited, Sagiri didn’t show up.

“Sa, Sagiri?”

I peeked inside and saw her hiding under the blanket, using a long pole to open the door just now.

“…What are you doing?”

I had no idea what to say. Yes, I’m used to it by now, but this still caught me off guard.

“Because….” She peaked outside, looking back and forth and muttered “If I saw Kyouka-sama behind the door…I would probably be scared to death….”

Kyouka-sama you said!? To think she was **that** afraid, it looked like *that accident* left quiet a scar. While she looked very moe under the blanket, *that accident*wasn’t something to joke about.

When I recalled her heart-breaking cry from that time, I couldn’t bear to hear it again. I entered and closed the door behind me, and asked in the most gentle voice I could.

“You knew that Kyouka-san came, right?”

“Yes.”

“Do you know what we talked about?”

“………………….”

She shook her head without answering. She shouldn’t have been able to hear our conversation.…but then how could she have heard the conversation between me and Elf or Megumi? Never mind, now wasn’t the time.

“About that…Sagiri…aunt said…” I trailed off.

“…She’s here to test me, isn’t she?”

“!”

I knew it! She could hear our conversation!

Sagiri probably had guessed what I thought, she shook her head:

“…That’s my guess.”

Saying that, she shook her body and slowly crawled out from under the blanket. From my position, I could see that part of her clothes was unbuttoned. This is how clothes are supposed to be!

I tried to force my eyes away while Sagiri changed.

“…June, last year…I promised her…that I will *rejoin society* …”

“………..”

I finally heard it from her, but —

“Do you have any idea what Kyouka-san meant by *rejoin society*?”

And button your clothes! I already saw too much!

“You…don’t want me to rejoin society?” She asked, puzzled.

“Yes! I want you to! But you won’t be able to! You are Sagiri! Izumi Sagiri, a hardcore hikikomori!”

“Mwu…you don’t have to say it like that…”

She pouted. I shook my head:

“I already made your situation a little bit easier. Do you have any idea how hard it was to extend your time to April …er? Why are you smiling?”

“Hmhm …do you think that I haven’t prepared anything?” She raised her (flat) chest, and announced “Nii-san, let me show you how I shall rejoin society.”

“Wh, what?”

Sagiri satisfied by my dumfounded expression, then noticed her unbuttoned clothes, and was embarrassed.

“Per, pervert!”

“Sorry!” I quickly turned away.

A silence filled the room, the atmosphere was unbearable —

Suddenly, her voice came from behind:

“….You can turn back now.”

“Okay.”

After a moment of silence, Sagiri said:

“What were we talking about?”

“You were about to show me the results of your rejoining society.”

“Nii-san….now, I want to go to school.”

“…Yes?” I was stunned for a moment “What are you saying?”

“Didn’t you hear me? I will say it again: I…want to go to school.”

“ ———————-“ My jaw dropped “Sa, Sagiri? Did you say…you want to go to school?”

“Go to school is the same as rejoin society, right?”

“Exactly! You did it Sagiri! You finally did it! I always believed in you!”

“Wah!”

She pulled back in hesitation “You scared me!”

“Ah, sorry….I was so happy.”

Sagiri going to school! Just once is fine! One day is fine! We can pass this test! And one of my primary objects is seeing my little sister go to school.

“Hmhm ~” She blushed, and turned away “Crafty…how could I get mad at you….”

“As long as you are motivated. I was worry that you might not be able to leave the room —“

Hearing my question, Sagiri grinned in satisfaction, and waved her hand “Watch me go to school, alright.”

“Sure.”

She turned the computer on, used the web browser to get to an online map site. Her icon moved around a bit before stopping at the Adachi area – where my house is, by the way.

“I’m going!”

She happily clicked the mouse. The screen began to move toward the school.

“You…you…could it be…”

Could it be…that’s what she meant? I misunderstood something, right?

It was nerve-wracking, but Sagiri was still busy clicking. The screen already showed the main road.

“Ha…ha…just a bit more…”

Seeing her made me realize what she was trying to do: go to school — online!!!!

“I have arrived! How is that, Nii-san…am I good?”

“This is just street view!” I yelled “You…you said you wanted to go to school , but the truth is you used street view! Don’t act like it’s something great!”

“But…” She pouted “This is already my best.”

“Oh….”

“I really tried my best.”

“Yeah. Right right.”

She was right after all. But I wasn't wrong either – yes, she was trying her best. She really was.

"Sorry." I muttered "But what can we do now? I don't think that Kyouka-san will accept this."

"…She won't?"

Seeing how confused she was hurt me, but I had no choice but to tell the truth.

"No, she won't. You need something more to show her that you are trying to rejoin society."

"Since June…after that promise…I practiced…but I couldn't."

"…You mean…you've been practicing?"

You practiced going outside? I thought when she greeted me at the door it was in celebration, but to think she was preparing for this test.

"…Um."

"And why did you made that promise? I didn't think that you could think that far ahead a year ago."

"Because…I…too…"

"Too?"

"Together…is good."

"Sorry, can you repeat that?"

I couldn't hear her. It isn't unusual for her to speak quietly, but just now her voice was too small, I didn't hear anything.

Sagiri hesitated, and then nodded:

"I don't want to be a burden to you!"

"Did aunt said so?"

She shook her head, and stammered:

"No, this is my problem…no one can do it for me…and…can't…can't do anything…so, I –"

“I need to do something too.”

Still the same words, but this time I understood her feelings.

“Is that so? I understand, do your best.”

“Yes.”

We laughed weakly. Sagiri continued:

“So…what can we do now? Testing… for me to rejoin society….”

“Well, we still have ten days left, let’s brainstorm something.”

Although I said that, but ten days weren’t enough. To let a hardcore hikikomori like Sagiri rejoin society in ten days…maybe even a year wouldn’t be enough. It’s just a dream.

Rejoin society…rejoin society…what exactly counted as rejoining society anyway? Too bad, it all depended on Kyouka-san. No matter how hard Sagiri tried, it didn’t count if my aunt didn’t acknowledge it – but, as long as she acknowledges it — “Um —“*2

We both tried to think of something. Suddenly, the doorbell rang –

“Izumi-chan ~ I’m here to play ~”

Megumi’s voice came from outside.

A few minutes later –

“So Izumi-chan needs to *rejoin society?* Is that what your guardian, Kyouka-san said? She was just here? Ah, I see —“

Upstairs, on the corridor next to *the locked room*, Megumi put her ears to the wall and listened in a weird pose. As soon as it was over, she raised a finger, said: “It’s like Papakiki all over again.” [14]

“I never thought that someday Megumi-sama would made that reference…yeah, that’s a nice one, but do you think that Kyouka-san is a female version of young-uncle ?” [15]

“Yup, it’s exactly what I think.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. Since when was Papakiki’s young uncle like that?

I don’t mind other details, but this was a major difference.

“Onii-san is like Sora-chan.”[16]

“I really want to hit you now.”

How many volumes did you read? What’s with that ridiculous comparison?

“Ehehe” Megumi stuck her tongue out “Today Onii-san is all tsun-tsun when I mentioned your aunt, just like a female lead in a light novel. Hmhm ~ maybe it’s true? My woman’s instinct is very accurate.”

“Stop raising flags whenever you want! It doesn’t sound like you are joking at all!”

“It’s just a joke, I didn’t mean to look down on Izumi-chan’s situation. Please explain it for me.”

Even I have to wonder why I decided to tell her something so important. Before I opened the door, I briefly considered telling her “Now isn’t the time, go home”. But instead, I let her in, and told her.

Unbelievable isn’t it? Was that Megumi’s communication skill?

“…Why did I decide to tell you again…”

I was talking to myself, but Megumi pouted:

“Ah ~ I’m sorry, I didn’t mean anything bad.” A slight pause “You did that because we’re friends.”

“_______“

That sudden answer caught me off guard for a moment.

“I will listen carefully, and even if I couldn’t do anything, I won’t tell anyone. And if there is something I can do, I will do.” She said, while making a *shhhhh* motion with her finger over her mouth.

“I see…thank you.”

“Um.”

So…even I was considered Megumi’s friend now…Friend huh…yeah, we became friends without realizing it…

Crap, I began to feel embarrassed.

“So….”

That was all I could say before a loud *bang* interrupted.

The door swung opened. Behind it was Sagiri, bare-faced, burning with determination.

“Why –“

I knew that for her, *inside the room* and *outside the room* were too completely different concepts. A single step outside is enough to nearly drain her dry.

Paled as a ghost, she said:

“Because…I am….friend too…so I have to….myself….”

In my opinion, just those words are enough to count as a *pass*.

While I had no evidence, but the fact remained that Sagiri considered Megumi her friend…it was better than before already. I need a way to make Kyouka-san see this result.

“Um..Megumi-chan.”

“Yes, Izumi-chan.”

“I have something to tell you.”

“Yes!” She happily raised a hand.

“But before that….”

“Before that?”

“There was something I’ve been hiding from you.”

“!”

Her eyes widened in shock. Even I didn’t see this coming at all.

“Sagiri, are you ….”

“….Yes.” She nodded “Megumi-chan is okay.”

She took another step towards Megumi:

“Before we talk…do you want to hear my secret?”

“A very important secret, right?”

“Yes…very important. I will die if someone aside from my best friend knows about it.”

“…I see.”

Megumi looked directly at Sagiri’s eyes, then she slapped her own face, and made a funny-looking, battle-ready pose while laughing “I’m done preparing! Go on, Izumi-chan.”

Sagiri also laughed “Then I will say it.”

“Um um”

“I….I….” She blushed furiously, her eyes turned into ><, and she yelled “I’m Eromanga-sensei!!!!”

“Yes, I have known that for a while.”

A few minutes later —-

“….hmmmmmmmm”

“Oh my, are you still mad, Izumi-chan?”

“Hm ~ I don’t know any Megumi!”

“You don’t have to be that mad? There were many clues, anyone could figure it out, right Eromanga-sensei ?”

“I don’t know anyone with that name.”

Megumi was trying to smooth thing over, while Sagiri just sat there hugging her knees.

The big secret that we tried so hard to hide was revealed before we even had a chance to say it. Based on what she said, Megumi already had a hunch since the time she was asked to be a model – and she knew it already by Christmas. Of course Sagiri wasn’t happy with it, all of her courage was wasted.

“But it’s still a good thing. Megumi didn’t change after learning about your secret.”

“Ehehe, of course! How could I hate my friend because of that!” She proudly said

Sagiri looked up, her eyes filled with determination.

"….Do you know that I like ecchi drawings?"

"Yup. I knew it since April, last year."

"Ah, that was my fault." I said.

"……………" She glared at me with a complex expression, before sighing"…You should have told me sooner."

"You're right."

We wouldn't have had to hide from our friend for so long.

"Megumi-chan too…if you knew then…say something."
"I wouldn't. Since you tried to keep it a secret, I wouldn't say anything either. Besides…I'm happy if Izumi-chan can tell me your secret on your own."

"…I see."

Embarrassed! Embarrassed!

"Then…let's have a talk."

After that, she told Megumi what we were talking about earlier – still stammering sometimes, but at least she was able to get it out Hearing her friend's story, Megumi wondered for a while then looked directly at Sagiri's eyes, and asked:

"Izumi-chan….this…must be a success, right?"

"Yes. No matter what."

"Then…."

"Megumi, do you have any ideas?"

"I do, actually."

"..Really?" We asked in a hopeful tone. She wagged her finger:

"Come here for a second — *blah blah blah* "

" —-What do you think?"

“!” *2 We both stared at her in shock

“Impossible, Megumi…it’s impossible! We only have ten days left! We won’t make it in time.”

“Yes, indeed.”

“Then why did you….”

“But this is the only way to make sure you will be acknowledged.”

“______“

“Kyouka-san is a serious woman, right? You two need to convince her that Izumi-chan has successfully rejoined society, don’t you? I think that you need to show her how much Izumi-chan tried, there is no other way.”

“………………”

Megumi’s idea will cause a tremendous pressure for Sagiri, I would have vetoed it under normal circumstances.

But her reason was solid, this is, after all, Sagiri’s test. But –

I was about to suggest another way —

“…Let’s go with that.” My little sister said in a low but determined tone “I don’t know if I can pull this off…but I will do my best.”

“Yes, you will.”

“Sagiri, are you really alright?”

“….Yes!”

“Okay, don’t push yourself too hard.”

If she has decided, then as her elder brother, there is nothing I could do but support her.

Time passed – and April 1st arrived. The summer break ended and everyone went back to school.

I’m now in my second year of high school. Sagiri entered her first year of middle school – of course, on paper only.

In the last ten days, Sagiri managed to do two very important things. What were they? The answer will be revealed shortly.

Ten A.M, the door of the Izumi's house slowly opened, Kyouka-san entered in formal clothing.

"Morning, Masamue-kun. Let's begin with the Sagiri's test."

"Yes." I quickly answered.

"Hm? Shoes? There is…someone else in the house?" She asked, looking at the cabinet.

"Yes…but please, pay it no mind."

"Okay." She looked up "So now what? Let me see how Sagiri will rejoin society."

"Yes. Please wait, Sagiri will show you the effort she made this year."

"Right here?"

It's understandable that she would be puzzled. Normally Sagiri never left her room when there was someone else in the house – but this time, I called to the second floor.

"Sagiri, you can begin now."

"…Masamue-kun?"

My aunt asked….actually, even I had no idea what will happen next. I knew what Sagiri was about to do, but only heaven knew whether she would have success or not.

I pointed at the stairs, and announced:

"Look…this is how Sagiri will rejoin society!"

"——————-" Seeing "that" happen, her expression stiffened.

With a series of footstep coming from the stairs — Sagiri, showed everyone how hard she tried.

She came down from the second floor, just like when she came to greet me – no, compared to that time, she was paler, her legs was trembling harder, but she kept walking. Not to mention —-

"Sagiri-san, that was…."

My aunt stared in shock. I already knew why, but even I couldn't help but swallow.

"…………….."

Today she wore a middle school uniform. She was supposed to wear it to go to school with friends – or not, since she didn't go to school at all. Oh well, even if she didn't, thanks to Megumi she did experience the feeling of wearing a uniform – if our parents were alive, if our relationship were better, maybe we would become closer as siblings.

In that moment, I couldn't but imagine what it would be like "if" things were different – I looked at my little sister, a melancholy feeling rose in my heart.

"…………"

What would Kyouka-san's reaction be? I wanted to know, but I couldn't tear my eyes away from my little sister.

"…..Phew….phew….."

Finally, Sagiri managed to reach us. The distance from her room was only a few meters, but she was breathing hard, her shoulders trembled, and her strength drained. With a pale face, she pushed herself a few more steps toward Kyouka-san She looked up and greeted:

"Good…good morning."

In an interview, a stammered greeting would mean game over for the participant, but now that was her best. What would aunt Kyouka's reaction be?

"….Morning, Sagiri. I'm surprised, you can go out of the room now."

I couldn't see any hint from her ice-cold expression.

"Just, just a bit."

Sensing that my little sister was about to faint from my aunt's aura, I quickly added:

"She was training everyday."

This was the result of her ten days long training. My heart was racing when I saw her come to me like this.

"Just a bit…but you could go outside now."

Kyouka-san didn't say anything else. Her eyes narrowed, like she was angry with something. Sagiri didn't say anything either, she looked like she could collapse at any moment.

Then, my aunt said:

“And?”

“!”

Still not passing? It still needed to continue? Was that what you meant? While I did prepare for this situation, my head was clouded with anger for a moment. In that moment, I completely forgot about what she had done for me and nearly let out an outburst — “Nii-san, there is more..”

Yes. There is more.

“Kyouka-san…this is…all I can do now.”

That was the truth. Sagiri could only go to the door. She couldn’t even leave the house.

My aunt nodded, and coldly said “Then it’s the end?”

Sagiri took a deep breath, shook her head

“While…I can’t go outside.”

“But…I want to go to school.”

Her words were conflicting, but she said it out loud.

Kyouka-san was even more puzzled, and she asked:

“You couldn’t go out…but you want to go to school? What’s that mean?”

In another time, I might have enjoyed the sight when “the Ice Queen” was confused.

“Ma, Masamue-kun, explain! I don’t understand anything!”

“Sagiri was showing her effort this year.”

“I knew that she wanted to go to school, but…”

How could she go to school without going out of the house? Not to mention no school opens this early in the year.

“Just like you see, going to school without going outside.” I said and blinked, and signaled to Sagiri “Just come with me.”

“Masamue-kun, is there anyone else in the living room?”

I showed the living room and other souls inside.

“———This is?”

“This is – Sagiri’s classroom.”

My living room had changed. All furniture was moved aside, replaced by chairs,tables like in school and a blackboard. Of course, there were students too.

Kyouka-san looked at the living room – no, classroom in surprise. From our position, our place was at the left side of the door – the place where adults usually sit.

“Please take a good look.”

“Masamue-kun, are you messing with me?”

The surprise disappeared from her eyes, and was replaced with coldness. But I can’t show any weakness now.

“That’s not what I meant.”

Ten days ago, Megumi’s plan basically came down like this:

1. Get out of the room. Go as far as possible.

1. Open a classroom there

Sagiri barely could managed the first, and the second…I thought we couldn’t do it at all. But since no one had any better ideas, we had no choice but to try.

“Please, just watch.” I begged and bowed down.

“Alright” She sighed.

“Thank you.”

I went to the blackboard and coughed, and said:

“Alright, class begin.”

I looked at the living room (classroom), my eyes stopped at aunt Kyouka, and I said:

“First, all students please introduce yourself.”

“Me first me first!” Megumi happily raised her hand, and turned to Kyouka-san, bowed “I’m Jinno Megumi, first year! I’m a classmate and the class rep of Izumi-chan! Pleased to meet you!”

“….Pleased to meet you too.”

“To tell the truth, this classroom was my idea! Last month, Izumi-chan asked me to find a way!”

“….Asked you? That child asked you?”

“Yes!”

“…………….”

My aunt’s face hardened, her eyes terrified everyone in the room, Megumi included.

“Umm…can I continue?”

“….Please do.”

Megumi closed her eyes for a few seconds, when she reopened them, all doubt had disappeared. She said in a tone that drew people in: “I first met Izumi-chan last year, in April. At first, I came to ask Izumi-chan to go to school. I wanted to become her friend, go to school together, and go to class together…that was all I intended to do.”

Is that how she controls the flow of a conversation?

“But then I meet Onii-san and speak with Izumi-chan, I know that things aren’t that simple. My teacher said that I shouldn’t rush into anything. Actually, I felt a bit down back then. I thought we could quickly become friends…”

Yeah, that’s how Megumi was.

“Then…many things happened…” She blushed, and looked down.

Yup. Stripped panties are so cute.

Her panties were taken, she read a light novel for the first time, her Christmas party – many things had happened.

“I asked her for a book, we exchanged presents…sometimes she even let me in to talk. Then suddenly last month, she told me about herself…now we are super close!”

She closed her eyes, and raised a finger “Next time, it’s my turn to tell Izumi-chan about my problems!”

Then she sat down with a grin.

“……………….”

After Megumi finished talking, Kyouka-san glared at me. She seemed to have understood the intention of this classroom. I nodded slightly and signaled the next student.

“…Next is me.”

That was Muramasa-senpai. I didn’t think that she could manage to get a middle school uniform like Sagiri, probably thanks to Elf.

….By the way, since the size was wrong, three of her top button were unbuttoned…really, this senpai of mine…

“Ma, Masamue-kun, where are you looking at.”

“I didn’t see anything! Really! Now isn’t the time.”

I immediately rebuked. She quickly covered her chest and turned to Megumi.

“…Jinno….did you purposely get a small uniform for me?”

“Nope! I even asked the girl with the biggest breasts in my class!”

“Kuh….!!!”

Muramasa-senpai blushed, then she turned to Kyouka-san, and elegantly greeted:

“My name is Senjyu Muramasa. I’m Masamue-kun’s friend. My hobby is writing.”

That was the first time I saw her speaking in such a polite tone.

“In the near future, I planned to become Sagiri-kun’s sister-in-law….”

I take that back. She still said whatever she wanted.

“…..Are you Sagiri’s friend too?”

“To tell the truth, I’m not sure. But…..”

“But? What do you mean?”

“Sometimes she asks me to wear revealing clothes in her room.”

“Masamue-kun! What’s the meaning of this!!!”

Senpai! Are you trying to kill me or what? Can you please not say that part?

“Model! She was asked to be a model! She is my senpai, we asked her to be our model!”

“Is that so? What kind of model?”

“Well…I was asked to wear swimsuit…Sagiri-kun happily drew…. Masamue-kun was there too…..”

“Masamue-kun? What are you doing when I’m not present?”

It’s not my fault, really! Why are you treating me like a crime boss?

Oh well, fine, crime boss is fine too! Fine!

“It was a reference for my novel! I needed to write a scene with lot of girls in swimsuits! All for my novel! For my future story! Is there a problem with that!”

“I absolutely forbid you from writing about that! And we will have a family meeting soon!”

After I took a bunch of shame, finally Muramasa-senpai’s introduction was over. By the way, in volume three there is scene when girls appeared in swimsuits.

“…Sorry…I haven’t finished practicing…I was so nervous.”

Senpai sat down full of regret.

Next was Army. Today she changed her hair style again. She was the oldest among us, so she looked like a cosplay foreigner — but it’s cute.

“Hello.”

“…..You are….”

“America, Kyouka-chin. It has been two years.”

“…………..”

My aunt’s eyes narrowed. So those two knew each other. Army is “Sagiri’s mom’s student”, of course it’s possible for her to know “father’s little sister”. When my father remarried my aunt was one of the loudest voices against that decision.

“I’m taking care of the manga of The Cutest Little Sister in the World , you can say I’m her co-worker. I bring some of her drawings with me here”. She said, while holding a stack of colorful paper.

They were all of the drawing that Eromanga-sensei made, from illustration, private drawing….which included her achievements.

“….Let me take a look.” Kyouka-san took them from Army, added “No need to be afraid. While I rarely read those kinds of novels, at least I knew that many people like them. We can’t rate Sagiri’s achievements last year without them.”

She looked at all of them. While some could arguably count as ecchi drawings, I still think that we should let her see them all.

Finally, she put them into her bag, and announced “They are worth considering.”

Army nodded and sat down. Next to her, another classmate didn’t look like she could wait anymore.

“Finally it’s my turn!” Elf yelled and stood up. She was wearing a uniform too, it suited her a lot.

She made a full 360 dramatic turn, then looked at Kyouka-san, and raised her (flat) chest:

“I’m Yamada Elf, Sagiri’s…friend, but sometimes we argue with each other…and we are rivals with the same goal…you can call is neighbors.”

“Yamada-san lives next door, right?”

“….Kuh” Elf clicked her tongue “Yes. Now I will present to you by intriguing back story.”

“There is no need for that, I have investigated it myself, Yamada Elf-sensei.”

“Wait wait! I practiced it a lot yesterday! Just let me talk!”

“No need.”

“Fine….” Elf was depressed, but she quickly came back to life “Then a short version is like this – what I wanted to say is — this is the test prepared by Sagiri’s home room teacher. All subject included. Masamune, take a look.”

I followed and gave my aunt the test. It was part of the plan. In ten days, Sagiri (staying at home, inside her room) took the test and showed that she really was capable of entering middle school. What a surprise, she (although barely) managed to pass.

I thought that she knew nothing but drawing, but turned out she still studies…Impressive, still trying so hard.

“Just like you see here, Sagiri can enter middle school.” Elf proudly announced.

By the way, Chris-aniki suggested that Elf take that test too. If I remember correctly, she got three 0s. The image of that girl was destroyed completely.

“…………………….”

My aunt looked at the test, then slowly glared at everyone inside the “classroom”. Her eyes began with me, then Elf, Muramasa-senpai, Army, Megumi. No one dared to say anything, until Elf finally managed to say: “You can see that – while each of us has our own reason for being here, we all trying to help Sagiri” She closed an eye, glanced at me, and added “I leave the rest to you, Masamune-sensei.”

Nice. Sensei can be used both for “teacher” and “novelist”.

Under the watchful eyes of everyone, I turned and walked toward my aunt:

“Kyouka-san, Sagiri didn’t hide in her room this year. She has friends now, friends close enough to steal each other’s panties.”

“E-even being close friends is not an excuse to steal my panties!”

“I haven’t forgotten the time when she tricked me to wear a swimsuit!”

Megumi, senpai. Be quiet, please.

Yes. They are all Sagiri’s friends. If we include some people who couldn’t come here, that number is higher.

All of them are close friends. At least, I myself think that this is enough – not because Sagiri is my little sister. For example, if I had to put up with four of them for a year, I probably couldn’t.

Maybe others might not agree, but to me, friends are a very important, they are a very precious thing.

“Her studies are good too. Barely passing is still passing. She could even go out of the room now. You see, she has friends already! Compared to Sagiri in the past that counted as rejoining society already don’t you think so?”

“Ah, I see. So this play is for Sagiri? I see.”

She calmly answered. Then with a sigh, she asked:

“Hm…how should I put it…its quiet hard to say…but what exactly does all of this mean?” [17]

“!”

I thought I misheard her! I did prepare myself, but I didn’t think that I would hear something so heartless. Our feeling had no effect at all. It’s like from bad to worse.

“….So this is the end?”

…..Actually, I understood that since it’s Sagiri’s test, Sagiri herself will have to end this. No choice then, this is our last card to play.

I turned back to the blackboard and then asked outside:

“Now, our newest classmate will come in.”

The door opened, revealing Sagiri. At that moment, Kyouka-san knitted her brow.

“……………….”

She stood at the door and tried to come in, but no matter how hard she tried, she couldn’t. Her arms and legs were trembling, she looked like she was about to cry – she must be terrified and in a lot of pain.

“….U….u….”

From the moment the training began, Sagiri never managed to finish this last step. Everytime, she would fall before that door. Ten days is only enough to bring her to everyone, not going outside.

But even so, I didn’t stop her. Sagiri herself said she would try her best, so I could only watch in silence.

At this moment, she looked up at me. Biting her lips, with teary eyes, she took the first step. And another. In that moment, she reached the highest achievement until now.

“…………………”

“………..Oh…”

Seeing Sagiri holding back her tears made me so worried.

"…Phew….phew…."

I can't drag this out. The longer it is, the harder for her. I tried to remain calm and announced:

"Finally, everyone, let's celebrate the first time Izumi Sagiri goes to school!"

I patted Sagiri's shoulder. Elf. Army. Megumi. Muramasa-senpai. Even Kyouka-san was clapping.

" ~~~~~ Ack…that.."

She was blushing and breathing hard. Maybe standing here made her nervous. Normally, just going out of *the locked room* is already hard enough, it's untestable she would be that way.

But no one, not a single soul laughed at her. Even the bigmouth Elf said nothing, waiting patiently. The classroom felt so peaceful.

"…Th-thank you, everyone…thank you very much."

Her words were filled with many, many emotions.

"I, I…was always unable to go to school. I couldn't…go out of my room….in two years…I was troubling Nii-san."

She put a hand over her chest, and said what was on my mind:

"But, Nii-san said…it's okay…it's fine if I don't go to school…I shouldn't push myself…even if I can't go out…I'm his precious little sister."

Hm? Wait, how could she knew about my conversation with Megumi — *Hey, did you tell her? You dare to break our promise? I will give you a perverted punishment! I will really do it!*

Seeing my anger, Megumi hastily waved her hand, denied: *It's a mistake! I still kept my promise. I didn't tell anyone!*

Then how could Sagiri know? Damn, it's so embarrassing! So damn embarrassing! She knew now!

The voice of Sagiri pulled me back to reality.

"I'm very happy."

Tears started to overflow

“Really, really happy…back then…I didn’t know what to do…I felt that I was so useless…I felt that I only…only did what I wanted to.”

Make live videos. Drawing illustrations online —

“All of that was fun…but it’s meaningless for Izumi Sagiri…no one see her at all”

They only saw Eromanga-sensei.

“…It was very lonely.” She cried “But…Nii-san…showed me a dream…he said…to make it together.”

She glanced sideways at me.

All of that wasn’t part of the script – originally, Sagiri’s line wasn’t that long, so even I was a bit confused. But I can’t hide here – my little sister tried so hard to say it, so it must be important. I needed to be here.

“And then…suddenly…and then….”

She put her pure white hand over her red face, closed her eyes, and yelled from the top of her lungs:

“Nii-san said….he liked me!”

“Eh? Eh?”

Why are you talking about that now?

“He even said…he liked me since our first meeting.”

“Heyyyyyyy!????”

What kind of messed up script was that!? Sagiri….did you even think about what you just said? That was something I said to you in private, but now, when repeated to someone else, do you understand what they would think? I only said that because I didn’t think it through!

“ ____________________“

See!? While Elf and Muramasa-senpai could be called “normal”, Army, Megumi and Kyouka-san looked like they wanted to say “is this guy serious!?”

The heck? How could this happen to me? Why did “greeting in a new class” turn into this?

What was my little sister trying to do?

I looked at Sagiri, crying. She clenched her hands, and then…

"….Me too."

Her tone was very small, but it hit me like a truck. My head was thrown into chaos.

"Wh, wh, what?"

"…Me too! I like him too! Just like he likes me, I like him the most!" Still crying, she leaned forward and confessed to me.

"~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~"

Both she and I blushed madly, our faces couldn't get any redder!

"So, I want to try harder with you! I want to …try together! I want to live with you! That's why I told Kyouka-san!"

"Because…me too….together…is good."

That was what she said, what I didn't hear back then.

Still blushing, Sagiri turned to Kyouka-san, said:

"…While I can't go outside now…while it's all I can do now…but there will be a day that I can go out, can go to school! Can fulfill our dream!"

In the past, Sagiri could never say it like this.

"And then…and then…"

The next part was spoken in a very low tone, so I couldn't hear her anymore. By her mouth's motion, my guess was she said "reach our dream", that's all.

"Please! Please….just a little more time!"

This is the end. Sagiri has done everything she could. If even that didn't work, we were finished!

"………………..”

We were waiting for Kyouka-san's reaction. The atmosphere was unbearable, ten seconds felt like an hour.

Without changing her expression, "Ice Queen" knitted her brow, and looked at Sagiri:

"…You two really are something. What can I say to you?"

"______________“

I felt a hint of despair. My aunt said "hmm",

"Don't make that expression. It's not like I like to torment you or anything."

An unimaginable pressure surrounded me. She waved a finger at my face, and added:

"Kuh….there was something I didn't say earlier, so listen well. On this test, the condition for passing is Even if she has to drag herself step by step, Sagiri has to meet me outside of her room. ."

"….Yes?"

"As long as she can do that, Sagiri passes."

"…That…that means?"

So your *"so this play is for Sagiri"*didn't mean *not enough, rejected* ——

"Of course she passed. She passed the moment I met her at the entrance."

——- *We passed without that play?*

"A play which is both ridiculous and naïve, a very child-like play. Good, that's how a child should be." She nodded, but glared "But you went overboard. Who forced Sagiri to go through this? It was too much for her!"

"Who…"

You asked? Why are you angry for?

"You, you are."

“Me? When?”

“You said and? and Then it’s the end? ! You are like a demon!”

“I was about to say pass .”

Are you kidding me? Your aura basically said I will fail you all! Prepare yourself! . You were like a final boss.”

“Look like we had a very big misunderstanding…after that time , do you think that I didn’t reflect on my actions?”

And just like a final boss, the pressure I felt from her increased. I could even see black wind coming from behind her.

“After that time…not only did I not reflect on a mistake, I did not listen to the doctor’s advice regarding you two, cruelly oppressed Sagiri – do you think of me as some kind of tyrant, a heartless guardian?”

Yes I do. Of course, I don’t have the balls to say it right, but…my expression probably said it anyway.

“___________________“

Creakkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkkk

What a terrifying teeth-grinding. Absolutely terrifying! Am I going to die!?

“I finally ~~~~~ know what you think of me!!! ………….. Masamue-kun……..I hate you the most!!!” My aunt started to cry.

….Is this my fault? She never tried to give me trouble? I couldn’t even believe my eyes, could it be that she really cared for us?

“So, sorry. Sometime I cause people to misunderstand me…”

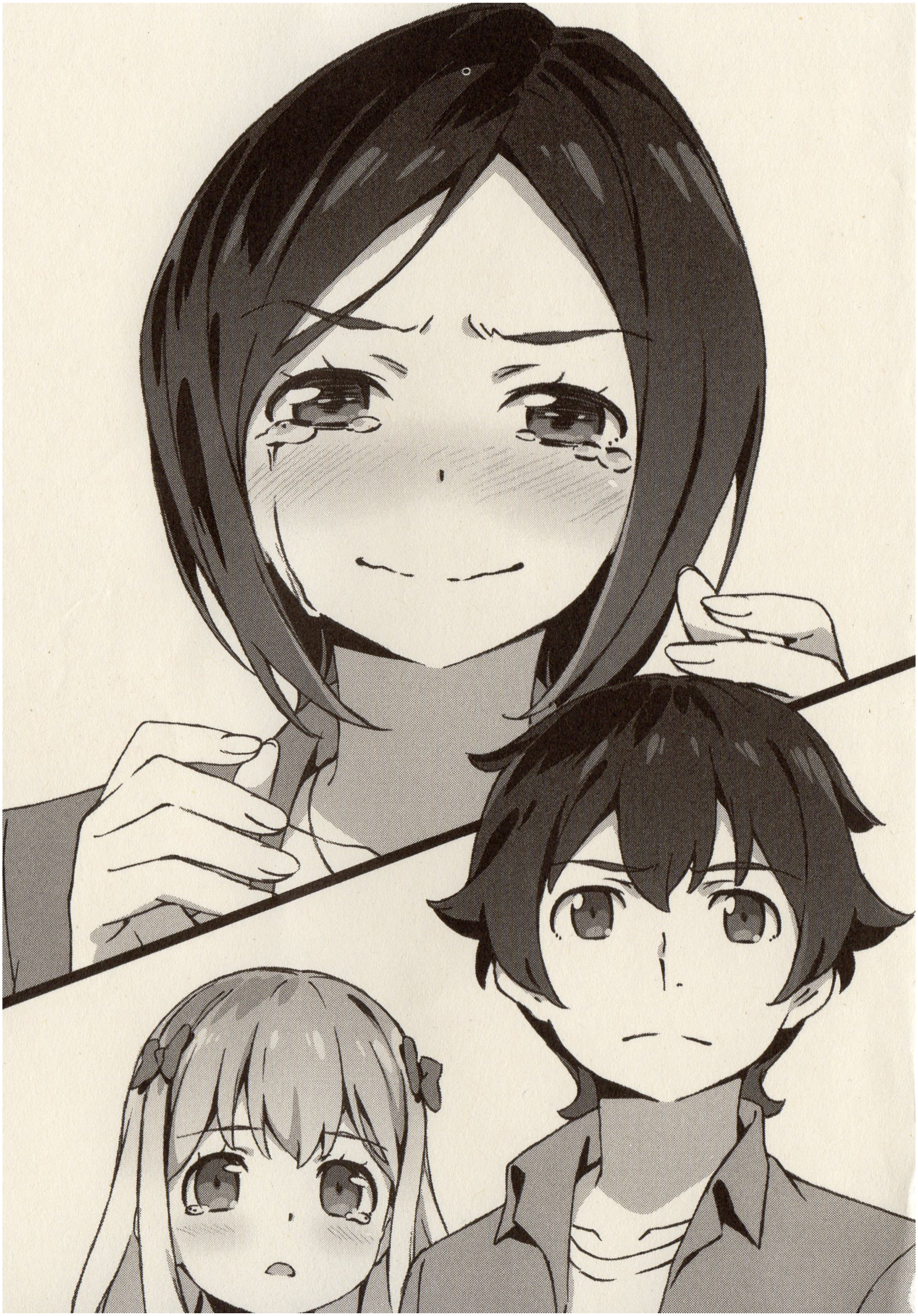
With a depressed expression, she wiped her tears and smiled with Sagiri

“Alright then…you have tried your best, Sagiri.”

Seeing her (somewhat) twisted smile…I finally felt at ease. Sagiri probably would agree too.

“……..Hah…”

And then, my little sister dropped on the floor with a satisfied smile.



Epilogue

エピローグ

— No need to worry, Masamune. Your aunt might look like she is angry, but she isn't.

— But…she was yelling at you before, father.

— Ahahaha, yes, she was angry then.

— It's scary, father.

— Ahahaha

I unconsciously recalled a conversation I had with my father.

It has been a week since Sagiri's test. Summer break has ended, and school has reopened. A new school year has begun, and we siblings celebrated our third year together.

Today, after school, I was having a conversation with Elf in the Izumi house's living room.

"….Say, Elf…what do you think?"

"What are you talking about?"

"About Kyouka-san…so she isn't my enemy?"

I think that since Elf is sharp and has an outside's point of view, she might be able to give me an accurate answer.

"She always looks like she displeased with something."

"There was a time she tried to separate us, and she forced Sagiri out of her room."

If our test didn't meet her expectations, she would use her own ways to treat her hikkikomorism against Sagiri's will, we would be separated.

"That's why I hated her, I tried to protect Sagiri, but…"

The test she gave us is reasonable, it’s realistic. At least, not the kind of test which we expected to fail.

— I hate Masamue-kun the most!

— Sagiri, you’ve tried your best.

The image of the “ice queen” shattered in my mind.

“I don’t have a clue. Nothing is clear at all.”

Hearing that, Elf put a hand under her chin for a moment, and said:

“Before I give my opinions, I need to ask you something: why did she agree to be your guardian?”

“…No idea.”

“How could you two live together now?”

“Because I asked her. I said I will find a way to cure Sagiri’s hikikomorism, so please let us live together. Family members should stay together.”

“Then why did you hate her?”

“Because she tried to force Sagiri out of her room, tried to separate us.”

“Then…why did she agree to postpone the test to April?”

“Didn’t I tell you? I begged her.”

“…………..Both of you are minors, how could you two work at the publishing company?”

“She vouched for us. We couldn’t do it without her.”

“Hmhm…..” Elf narrowed her eyes, her expression grim.

“What’s wrong?”

“It’s nothing…I just thought that you really are dense…but it looked like it wasn’t the only reason. It’s understandable that you misunderstood – she was quite hard to understand, after all.”

“Would you please say it in a way that I can understand?”

“To use language that a siscon like you could understand, it’s like this: she is the hidden-type little sister, who hides her true feeling under a mountain of double-meaning and half-truths.”

What? Why use little sisters as an example? What exactly does Elf think of me?

“In other words, unless you have enough life experience to translate her hidden meanings, you wouldn’t be able to understand her. You will always think that she is hiding something important.”

“I see….”

“If there is someone who could understand her words, that person certainly isn’t me. It must be someone who she frequently meets.”

So even the sharp-minded Elf couldn’t see through Kyouka-san’s heart.

“Anyway….she’s the only blood-related relative I have…I’ll try to see her more from now on.” I sighed, and then continued: “Elf.”

“Yes?”

“Congratulation for entering a new school year.”

“Same to you.”

Try to see her more – yes, we did meet again later.

“Masamue-kun, I have something to tell you, would you go to a café restaurant with me?” She asked me via phone.

“How about our home, aunt?”

“….But Sagiri wouldn’t like it if I came.”

Her voice dropped. But even so, I felt like a bucket of cold water was dropped on me.

— No need to worry, Masamune

Yeah…I decided to see her more….

“A few times should be fine…Sagiri said so.”

“Sagiri…said so?”

“Yes. But I don’t dare to meet her face to face , I’m sorry, we are family but I couldn’t see you . That was what she said.”

“……………………….I see. This child has changed a lot.”

She came not long after that. It looked like she called me when she was already nearby.

“Welcome home, Kyouka-san.”

“…I’m home.”

I greeted her at the door like a family should – while not long ago, I didn’t even treat her like one. I’m glad for her help, but at the same time I treated her like an “enemy” who was trying to separate us. I knew its wrong, but I couldn’t help it.

As long as it’s something related to my little sister, I quickly lose my calm and treat everyone like an enemy – someone warned me of that before. Too bad, I couldn’t manage to fix it.

I sat down in front of my aunt. Without waiting for tea or snack, she asked:

“Masamue-kun, you have something you want to ask me, don’t you?”

Straight to the point. This is a rare chance anyway, I need to ask if I wanted to become family with her.

I swallowed hard, said:

“….There are two things I want to ask.”

Her ice-cold eyes glanced at me.

“First, why did you agree to take us in?”

She narrowed her eyes. I carefully looked at every changed in her expression, and continued:

“I have never heard you talk about this reason, please answer me if you can.”

“………………………..”

She glanced at me without blinking. I kept talking.

“….I always thought that you hated me. You always fought with Mom. I can see how bad your relationship with Mom was…so shouldn’t you hate her son – me?”

“!”

“But you took us in. I don’t understand why.”

“…….If I hated you kids…I wouldn’t have taken you in.”

Her voice was so painful, but her expression didn’t change at all. I got a feeling that her expression was saying “Why did I take you in? Because I wanted to kill you myself!”

“Masamune-kun….it is true that my relationship with your mother was complicated. If you asked me whether I hated her or not….then my answer is **absolutely.** However, I…don’t hate you. You are still a child, but you’ve done many amazing thing…you’ve always thought about others ever since you were small.”

Her voice dropped when she praised me.

“But the moment you grew up….such misfortune struck….you grew up without a mother…without an adult to spoil you….that’s why….”

She spoke very clearly when she lectured me, but now….strange.

“It’s just a misunderstanding.”

She still look terrifying to me, but somehow I felt that she was sad.

“In other words…you….did it because you pity us?”

“No.” A firm answer came immediately.

“Then…why?”

“……………….”

We just sat there and looked at each other. Finally, she slowly said:

“I refuse to answer.”

“You can’t tell me the reason?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“Because it would be disadvantageous for me. But….”

“But?”

“I hope that you will find happiness. That’s what I truly hope for.”

“……….I understand.”

Normally, an adult can made up any reason for this situation.

It would be disadvantageous for me, so I refuse to answer. That was her answer. Looked like she was far from my imagination, too honest for her own good. Just like a foolish computer, she couldn’t adjust herself and only played her role as our guardian.

“The second is about my little sister – what exactly do you think about Sagiri’s situation.”

We can’t get anywhere without clearing this up, and I certainly couldn’t trust her without an answer. A few days ago, I thought she hated both Sagiri and I, was that wrong? I needed to make it clear.

Still with her poker face, my aunt said:

“She’s a good child. At least I think so, for the moment.”

“You mean, before you didn’t think that way.”

“If I have to say…I didn’t know her situation back then.”

Understandable. She took us in when she and Sagiri barely knew each other.

“However” She continued “…After that incident, after I found out that she is a hikikomori, I still think that you two shouldn’t live together. It’s clear that you are under a lot of pressure. You have to work, to go to school, to take care of a hikikomori, all while still needing to find a way to cure her…It was hard even when you lived alone with your father. As your guardian, I couldn’t turn a blind eye to that.”

— You will find happiness.

That was what she meant. Then, she asked me a simple question:

“Now, are you happy?”

I smiled, and replied:

“Yes. I am happy. I have an important little sister. I have a job that I enjoy. I have a dream that I could reach.”

“It’s good then. Looks like I don’t need to worry.”

I knew that my aunt rarely smiled, and I even know why – all I need to do is compare her now and the time when she got mad with Dad.

— Who, who said I want to celebrate my birthday!

— Nii-san!! Really! Do something so suddenly….hm, I don’t know. And I don’t smile! Don’t look at me! Nii-san….I hate you the mostttttt!!!!

Two years ago…my little sister locked herself up, and I wasn’t exactly any better – both my parent passed away and left us with a huge mental scar. But not only is us — here, there another one, another little sister who also lost her smile…

“I finally understand. You two consider living together as the highest happiness –“

She looked angry, but actually, the “Ice Queen” was smiling – at least that was what I thought.

“— However, Masamune-kun, it’s a different matter whether it’s truly better if you two live together.”

“Eh?”

“After listening to what Sagiri said, and reading your novel…I feel that it would be more dangerous if I let you two live together.”

“Eh? EH?”

“That’s why I will watch you more from now on, what’s that expression mean? Didn’t you say I could come here a few times?”

“Yes, I did….”

“It’s decided then.”

“…Kuh.”

It was so hard for me to get a“like” from Sagiri! Now I have to deal with this too!!!

“I’m going back.”

She stood up. Before she left, my aunt turned back, her eyes turned into two ice columns and hit me straight on.

“Listen well, Masamune-kun. I don’t ask you of anything. I don’t force you to live up to your dreams, your work or anything. If you don’t find happiness in what you do anymore, just let it go. If you want, just tell me, anytime, anywhere.”

“I will take care of you myself.”

Only then did her glance withdraw, leaving me behind.

After that, Kusanagi-senpai came too. Of course, he carefully asked if my aunt was here or not before arriving.

It looked like the first meeting gave him quite a blow – and he might have gave Kyouka-san another bad impression about light novel authors. Maybe its better that they didn’t meet again.

And why did he decide to come here for?

“Izumi, I want to apologize for my action here last time.”

Turned out he came to say sorry. He brought money (to pay for washing the floor) and meals…even though it was someone else who spewed here last time…It looks like he isn’t hopeless…

“It’s okay.”

“Thank you. After I got up – I felt so bad at my behavior, but I didn’t dare to call.”

A bit of a coward, thought.

Compared to his arrogant attitude when he got an anime, this is closer to his real self. Today, he cosplayed as Cloud, with a black coat, and a silver accessory, “As an apology, I brought some food, do you want them?”

Yes! It was the type of cake I liked the most!

“I told you, I already forgave you and Shidou-kun for vomiting in my house. And the fact that you gave Kyouka-san a bad impression about light novel authors.”

“It’s good to hear…since you forgave me, can you listen to my story?”

“If it’s okay to talk in front of my house.”

“…Can we go in instead?”

“Looks like it will take a while – are you still angry?”

“Of course! When people face something painful, they will be depressed, their mind will keep seeing that cruel event over and over again. Even drinking or working wouldn't help. Only in light novels can some guy recover in a heartbeat. Real life is not that easy! That's why I'm angry."

Yeah yeah, he is letting his mouth run wild again. Well, I agree with him at least. There is no way to recover immediately after a painful experience. Even if someone looked recovered, they aren't. The wound will leave a mental scar – which only gets worse with time.

Some might not be able to handle it and lose their smile. Some might drag themselves into the street. Some might turn into a hikikomori.

And it's not just us. I'm not naïve enough to say "it's just life", but most people went on their whole life like that, hiding their own wounds.

That's why they need to go to school, need to read a book – in order to make sure they don't lose hope in life.

"Look like Kusanagi-senpai is back to normal."

"Yeah, I felt something switch inside of me when I heard about an anime. To think I said something so foolish back then…"

He is actually quiet pessimistic, unlike Elf.

"The blu-ray of Pure Love anime has made it to volume three. The mist in the hot bath is all removed."

"That's normal in anime."

"Yes. However, this time, the reason people complained was because they said The heroine's areolas was too big! !"

"…………."

I don't have any clue what to say to him.

"My fans are very angry! They said Was it the author's idea to make such large areolas? or What a weird color! – they swarmed my blog with their comments!"

"So….you think that they shouldn't say so?"

"No. People might say that only weirdos say that, but I think since they paid for my work, I mustn't badmouth them in anyway. I truly think so. But!"

"But?"

“They are all idiots! Truly idiots! Unbelievable idiots! Why are they telling me all that? What will it change? I didn’t see the areolas when I checked, how could I know if they are big or small? I don’t have special powers! Everyday was so much trouble! It’s like a father whose son the teacher called to complain. I was so tired, how long until this ends….”

This conversation must not reach his readers. All of them were complaints from the author himself.

“Today too. I’m the original author, but I have to beg the editor *Please show off less of that character’s areolas!*”

He had his own weakness, but at least he treated his fans with kindness. What he said earlier didn’t change that. I need to learn from this side of him.

“Oh damn, the recent months were so chaotic, I didn’t have time to write anything…I was about to forgot my own job!”

He sighed, and continued:

“Izumi…life isn’t easy. I was so mad that I wanted to tell everyone about the dark side of this damn job!”

“Enough already! Stop, please!”

“Nope, Izumi. I’m not telling you because you’re an author or a newbie. I only wanted to vent my frustrations.”

So you were just trying to vent? I thought you were acting tsundere.

“No, I was trying to turn my anger into work motivation. Working is definitely better than fooling around, but I don’t think I could last long. Maybe tomorrow, maybe next year, but soon I won’t be able to write anymore, my career will come to an end.”

“You said the same thing when your novel got an adaption.”

You’re still the same…

“No, really. This time, my career is really in danger. Now I understand why some of my seniors disappeared after they got an anime adaption.”

Saying that, his motivation suddenly died down, and he shrugged:

“Phew, it felt so good to get all that out.”

“I thought you came to apologize to me!?”

"I'm leaving, there is still much that needs to be done." He turned and was about to leave.

"Much needs to be done?"

"My job, of course. I was about to die, yes. But I'll keep writing until my last breath….and my bank account was almost empty…"

This is what people called a true tsundere!

The next day, after school, I went to the Kita-Senju station to meet Megumi. Per her suggestion, we found a café shop, then I treated her.

"Thank you, Onii-san!"

"You are welcome."

"Ehehe, asking an older boy to treat me, I felt like I'm an adult already."

You make it sound like I'm the type who picks up girls randomly from the street….

After that, we went to the Arakawa area. Both sides of the road were filled with long lines of cherry blossom. Just walking on this path made people feel better.

"Ya – luckily the flower is blooming."

"Fufufu, this is the best spot to go on dates recently. I was planning to ask you to come."

"Oh, is that so?"

Megumi grinned. Since she entered her second year, she became more and more mature.

"Megumi! Stop pulling my hand!"

"Eh? You looked quite happy."

I'm not! Let go of my hand.

"By the way –"

"Yes?"

"About the reason I treated you today…."

"You wanted to thank me, didn't you?"

“Party. Do you remember the requested present from White Day?”

You know, the time when you gave me a list.

“Yup.”

“It gave me quite a headache…but I’ve decided to repay you.”

“Eh? Onii-san, what are you talking about?”

She said, waving her hand around. Amidst the flying cherry blossom, this scene looked so cute.

“I have received my White Day present.”

“Eh?”

What? When?

“Don’t you remember? There was a special case in that list.”

Seeing that I still had no clue, she pouted, muttered “Special present! Onii-san makes Izumi-chan goes to school.”

“Ah…..”

“It was a wonderful present. Thank you. Ehehe.”

“Really….”

If she acted this way towards everyone, it’s clear why she’s so popular.

And lastly – about Sagiri.

April 1st, on the day of that test —

…I…also like him.

What she said was the same as a confession to me.

— I have someone else I like.

When I confessed, that was her answer. Could it be that person she like is…

I have to clear this up – or rather, that was the plan, but after that day she hid inside *the locked room* all day, without seeing me.

Of course, we had a few small conversations at the door whenever I brought her meals to her, but that’s all.

To tell the truth, I could force my way in if the situation called for it, but I didn’t dare – it’s embarrassing. Very…embarrassing. I’m kind of afraid of the answer.

In short, I didn’t dare to ask.

“…Guh, guh.…”

I was restless for a few days already, she’s the only image in my mind.

Today was the same – just when I was thinking that.

Thud thud

The ceiling shook. This sounded like – “I have something I want to say, come here.”

If that’s what she wanted. I couldn’t ignore her. I mentally prepared myself and went to her room. A moment later, the door opened.

“………………….”

Somehow, today her clothes looked very nice. Just one look was enough to make both of us blush.

I fully understood that this situation was weird – after the confession, after she answered saying that she “liked me”, it’s clear that she would talk about that “confession”. I’m so nervous that I think I could faint.

“……………………..”

“……………………..”

None of us said anything. Finally, I decided to begin

“About…..” *2

Both of us fell silent once more.

“……You first.”

Sagiri said. Ok then.

“Sagiri….well…about what you said a few day earlier….”

“~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~” She blushed madly, about to tear up.

“Yes, it’s about that…”

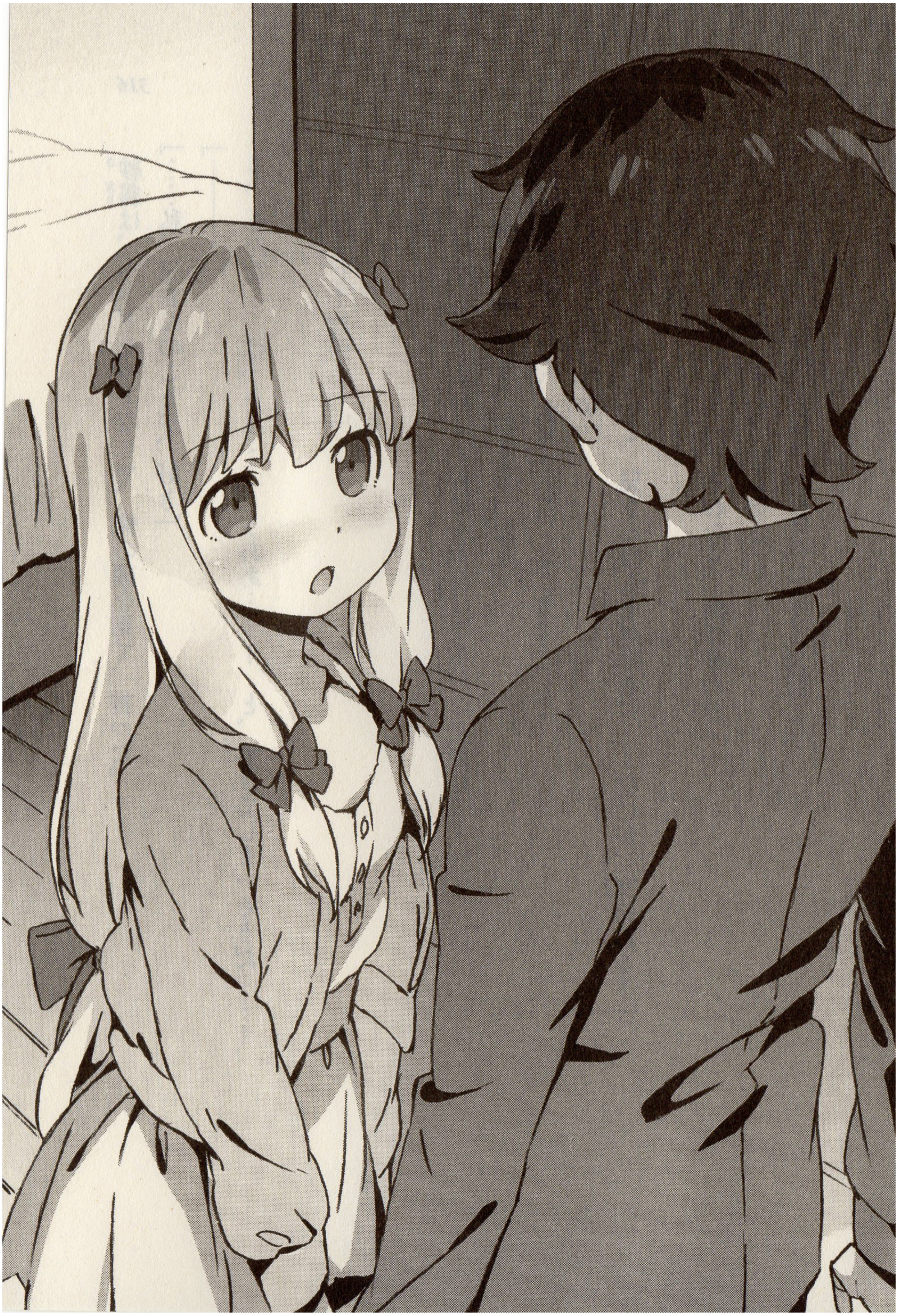
“Um…um…..”

Sagiri looked at me

“……..I, I like you.”

“_______“

Oh…so direct….oh…I…felt like I was melting…



“As a little sister”.

“———Yes?”

“Nii-san, you want to be a real brother to me, don’t you?”

“Yeah…yeah….yes, I did say that.”

“Real brother and sister can’t love each other, right?”

“…..Yes, I said so too.”

“So, I like you as a little sister, is there a problem with that?”

“….No.”

“Mwu….then it’s good, what’s with you today…” She pouted.

— I got the feeling that she was taking revenge on me. Why? How strange.

“Phew…” My shoulders dropped. Frankly speaking, I felt a bit down, yet assured at the same time.

Seeing me like that, with a displeased tone, Sagiri said “You’re an idiot”

Afterword

Fushimi Tsukasa here. Thank you for reading volume five of Eromanga-sensei. Just like I said before, half of this volume is about Christmas, the rest is about Valentine.

In Eromanga-sensei, there is no certain rules said that a character “wouldn’t steal the spotlight from the main character”, “an useless character won’t appear”, “only appear in the beginning”. In this book, I made a rule myself, that I will write “each character lives like normal people”. If everyone find that interesting, it would be great.

In the later part, my hidden hint from volume one was finally revealed. This book actively trying to hide a part of the main heroine’s characteristic. I’m looking forward to see everyone’s reaction, and to tell the truth I was worry.

In the recent years, my back hurts a lot. But thankfully, it didn’t hurt that much when I wrote this volume. If only that could make this book more interesting.

The next book will be even better, please looking forward to it.

Please take good care of me.

2015, July. Fushimi Tsukasa.

Translator's Notes and References

[1] Book Off is Japan’s largest chain of used bookstores. Founded in August 1991, the company has had explosive success, expanding to 866 stores throughout Japan and eight overseas locations.

[2] Shirobako

[3]http://myanimelist.net/people/17147/En_Mikami: manga artist. I haven’t read any of his work, thought.

[4]A baseball video game in Japan

[5]First Person Shooter – Eg: Counter Strike, Call of Duty, Battlefield…

[6]Third Person Shooter – Eg: Resident Evil, Grand Thief Auto…

[7]Probably some kind of achievement

[8]A crossover game with many famous characters from others Nintendo game [9]Tabletop Role Playing Game: RPG played with dice and character sheet, Eg: Dungeon and Dragon [10]Trading card game – eg:Yugioh trading card game…

[11]A Japanese company specify in making cosplay clothing

[12] Men’s Knuckle is a famous magazine for men in Japan

[13] Around $1100

[14] Also known as Papa_no_Iu_Koto_o_Kikinasai (http://myanimelist.net/anime/11179/Papa_no_Iukoto_wo_Kikinasai), a light novel about a guy who lives together with his three (non-blood related) nieces.

[15]: The main character of Papakiki, Segawa Yuuta (http://myanimelist.net/character/50775/Yuuta_Segawa) , was called that by his youngest niece, which is an incorrect form of Ojitan (uncle) [16]http://myanimelist.net/character/50777/Sora_Takanashi The oldest niece among Yuuta’s, who also had some non-family feeling toward her uncle [17] I have to agree here, what the heck does that mean anyway? Heartless? What the hell with you Masamune?